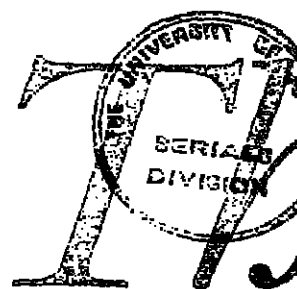


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These three men have been trying to change Anne Slaine's life. Have they succeeded?



Unionist and SDLP leaders David Trimble (left) and John Hume (right) line up with Tony Blair for a Yes vote in County Antrim yesterday PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAN LEWIS AND (below) KELVIN BOYES

Agony of an act of faith

On the day an historic decision must be made **John Mullin** talks to a woman whose plight mirrors Ulster's dilemma

ANNE Slaine, aged 58, from Cookstown, County Tyrone, lives an ordinary life. Today, she is called on to make an extraordinary decision. Mrs Slaine, a retired occupational therapist, is one of Northern Ireland's silent majority. They are people with no time for extremists, and who keep their own counsel while getting on with their lives.

A mother of two and grandmother to five, Mrs Slaine is a Protestant, though her faith was tested when Reg, her husband, drowned while they were on holiday at Portrush on the Antrim coast nine years back. She has always voted Ulster Unionist.

Analysts believe Mrs Slaine and those like her hold the key to Northern Ireland's future when they vote in today's referendum.

They say women aged over 40 who are Unionist support-

ers are the most reluctant group when it comes to embracing the Good Friday Agreement. Some people made up their minds immediately. But up to 20 per cent of Unionists are still thought to be undecided. Today, they will make the difference between the deal's success and failure.

Mrs Slaine is typical of them in all respects, bar one: what happened to her only son, Paul. She admits that has caused her agony as she weighs up what to do.

As she sips coffee in the White Gables Hotel in Hillsborough, Co Down, the handsome village where Mo Mowlam, Northern Ireland Secretary, has her official residence, she explains her concerns. She thinks her story is unremarkable, perhaps, though, the values it illustrates offer an insight into the dilemma facing tens of thousands.

"My mother and father were Elizabeth and Tom Greer. They always had Catholic as



Anne Slaine with her son Paul at Hillsborough, Co Down

well as Protestant friends. That was always the way. He was a hardware merchant in Cookstown, and my brother, John, five years younger than me, ended up taking it over. It's closed now."

Two days after Christmas, 1963, she married Reg and moved to Omagh "because Reg saw a job going as an organist at St Columba's". They had two children, Niki, now 30, is married with a 10-month-old son, Jamie. Her brother Paul is two years older.

The family was relatively untouched by the Troubles,

complacent even. Mrs Slaine was shocked by atrocities, but there were so many. She believed the nationalist community was badly treated. She was still getting over the death of her husband after 26 years of marriage when she was in Amsterdam as principal at a vocational college for the young disabled. On the television news, she saw the remains of a police car, ripped apart by an IRA bomb in Newry, Co Down. She watched as the photograph of RUC constable Colleen McMurray, aged 33, flashed on the screen. Her son

was in the RUC, and he often worked with Mrs McMurray. She phoned home in a panic, to discover Interpol had been trying to track her down. It was March, 1992. Paul, who had joined the RUC four years earlier, was fighting for his life. He had lost both his legs, a finger, and they feared for a time for his right arm. He had serious head injuries, a lacerated throat, and needed 66 pints of blood.

He is 32 now, a father of four, and back at work in the RUC. He is an ebullient man, helped through his crisis by his wife of 12 years, Allison, a psychiatric nurse. He staves off the bitterness, but he cannot forgive. The terrorists who killed his partner and almost murdered him have never been caught.

Mrs Slaine, proud of how her son has coped, says: "There are parts of the deal I like. I think that after so many years of Direct Rule we are going to have some say in our own destiny with the assembly."

"But I look upon Yes as somehow letting Paul down, and those people who have suffered at the hands of terrorists who will now be able to walk the streets. The issue of the release programme for prisoners is the real problem, and it is for a

lot of people." She rejects Tony Blair's guarantees that Sinn Féin will be excluded from the proposed power-sharing executive if the IRA fails to hand in its weapons. He will, she says, be unable to deliver. "I have agonised so much about it. I listen to the radio all the time, and I watch a lot of television. I hear one politician saying why I should vote No and agree with him, and then listen to the other side and change my mind. Maybe I'm easily swayed."

"If my generation doesn't bite the bullet now, we are simply deferring it for another generation. At some stage we are going to have to talk to people we do not want to talk to, that we feel we shouldn't be talking to. But it has to be done."

"I took part in a radio show last week, and spoke of my fears of betraying my son. A schoolboy was the last to speak on it. He told me to think about whether I would be betraying my grandchildren by voting No, and that had an important effect on me."

"On balance, I think in my conscience, I must vote Yes. I hope I do not live to regret it. It is a leap of faith."

Leader comment, page 13

Expelled boy shoots 18 at school after killing parents

Pupil's talk of 'wanting to shoot everyone' had been ignored

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

THE spectre of a schoolyard murder returned to haunt the United States last night after a boy aged 15 who had been expelled for bringing a gun to class shot dead his parents and his sister at home before going on a shooting rampage in his school, killing one pupil and injuring 17 others. The boy, named as Kip Kinkle, had been expelled from

the 1,700-pupil Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, the previous day for trying to bring in a handgun. Janice Brady, aged 19, a student at the school, said the boy was known for trying to sell guns. "He came to school every day and talked about how he wanted to shoot everyone and nobody did anything about it. Just because a person doesn't like school you don't take him seriously, I suppose."

She said that pupils had gathered in the cafeteria before classes after a ceremony

in the library to honour students who were graduating next month. The boy came in a side door dressed in a trench coat and dark fatigues and carrying three guns, one a 22 rifle. "He was just aiming at people and 'pow!' and aiming again and shooting again. One boy who tried to protect others was shot." The boy only stopped shooting when he was wrestled to the ground.

Four pupils were critically ill with wounds to the head, chest and abdomen. Four others were at another hospital. Both hospitals had been put on full alert as a shuttle of ambulances brought in the wounded. Altogether 30 pu-

pils were hurt, but some injuries were incurred in a stampede as screaming children rushed down the corridors, some falling as they tried to escape. In a separate incident, a boy aged 15 carrying a 9mm semi-automatic handgun got on his school bus in Onalaska, Washington, yesterday, took his girlfriend off and then went to his home and shot himself in the head as her father tried to break down the door.

The boy was in critical condition at a hospital in Seattle, 75 miles away. No one else on the bus was hurt and the girl, aged 14, was also not injured. In Springfield yesterday,

parents waited in a church near Thurston High to discover if their child had been hurt. The boy, who was immediately arrested and questioned by police, was described as moody and volatile and had apparently stolen the guns from his father, who had several.

This followed the pattern of another school massacre in Jonesboro, Arkansas, less than two months ago. Two boys, aged 10 and 13, dressed in camouflage uniforms, began sniping at girls leaving a local school after the pair set off a fire alarm.

The boys, who had three rifles and other guns stolen from the father of one of

them, killed four girls and a teacher. In December, three girls were killed when a boy aged 14 opened fire on a prayer meeting. A fortnight later in Arkansas a boy nicknamed "Colt", also aged 14, shot and wounded two classmates. Nearly 20 children have been shot dead in school killings since 1993.

Springfield is a small community near the central Oregon city of Eugene, which is known as the athletics capital of the West. Neither place has a reputation for crime or gangs.

The boy, who was in his first year at the school, was turned to page 2, column 3

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Sketch

It's enough to make you chowl



Simon Hoggart

CONSIDERING what a wonderful fortnight he has enjoyed, the Chancellor looked rather glum. But then he usually does.

Most people would be thrilled to see their enemies laid waste, destroyed, risen, their political careers salted over so that nothing can grow there again.

And it has been a dreadful spell for Robin Cook, Gordon Brown's old rival. Their's is an enmity which makes Cotic and Rangers look like Tristan and Isolde. What is its cause? Nobody seems to know, even the two protagonists.

It appears to go back to some dark Caledonian past. Some say that it is due to Mr Cook's belief that he is the senior party and should occupy the senior post. He is some years older than Mr Brown, who was a humble canvasser for him when he first stood for election.

Others allege that Mr Cook was, on one occasion, thunderously and unforgivably rude to Mr Brown.

There are those who suggest that it may have something to do with the great devotion debate of the late 1970s, when Mr Brown was in favour and Mr Cook against. This seems improbable, since their's is a feud that transcends mere politics.

Now and again someone will try to arrange a meeting to patch things up. These never work. Frequently one of them fails to appear. Recently Mr Brown has, in public, been offering support for Mr Cook in his travels.

But in the meantime his satraps and envoys have been pleading with lobby journalists not to print any news about the Chancellor, for fear that this will use up valuable paper which could instead be devoted to the Foreign Secretary's embassements.

Of course, Mr Brown could not say any of this at Treasury

Questions yesterday. But he did have the joy of yet another Tory split on Europe.

The Conservative Party is in complete disarray," he chortled, or came as near to chortling as Mr Brown ever does. It's a sort of chuckling scowl. He "chortled" the words out.

Michael Heseltine had called William Hague's "riots in the streets under the euro" speech this week "extreme".

Mr Clarke had said his party was in danger of being "unelectable".

All that was needed for Mr Brown's cup to be full was for his opposite number, Peter Lilley, to make an ass of himself, and this he duly did. Lilley had often compared the Tory treasury spokesman with Dr Niles Crane, in the TV programme Frasier. I gather he doesn't watch the show himself. So why does he sound more and more like Niles?

Every time he (Mr Brown) goes off into anti-rant, he alienates thousands of people who listen to these exchanges," Mr Lilley said in a previous sort of voice, to the loud laughter of the studio audience. Sorry, fellow MPs.

He wondered aloud why Mr Brown seemed well-disposed to the euro, but eager to avoid rejoining the exchange rate mechanism. "Isn't it like being willing to paddle in the shallow end while being ready to throw the pound into the deep end? (laughter, mostly unkind) And I will have a large mocha latte, thank you, Frasier!" (I made the last bit up, but you get the idea).

There was a curious moment when Malcolm Bruce, the Lib Dem spokesman, asked a perfectly reasonable question about public borrowing to Alistair Darling, the Chief Secretary.

Mr Darling went into an anti-rant about how tax 'n' spend was at least a realistic policy, whereas the Liberals wanted only to spend and spend. "This is why his party has no credibility in these matters at all," he shouted.

If I had been Mr Bruce, I would have stood up and said: "Is the right honourable gentleman aware that I am about to marry a beautiful woman less than half my age? And that consequently I don't care a flying fart what he thinks about anything?" But he didn't, of course.

Review

Evocative scenes from a lost world

Richard Williams

Flowers of Shanghai Cannes Film Festival

IN THE closing decades of the 19th century, the British sector of Shanghai contained a number of establishments known as "flower houses", where Chinese men of the professional classes could eat, drink, smoke, converse, play after-dinner games and form relationships — sometimes lasting and exclusive ones — with beautiful and sophisticated girls.

A novel called *Flowers of Shanghai*, written in 1894, when the phenomenon was at its height, provides the first-hand source material for a new film by the distinguished Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien, telling a story set among these houses.

Hou's previous films — notably *Puppetmaster* (1993), *Good Men, Good Women* (1995) and *Goodbye South, Goodbye* (1996) — were among the winners of the secondary prizes at the Cannes festival. Now his disciplined evocation of a lost world, one swept away by the end of the imperial dynasties in 1911, has put him among the front-runners for the Palme d'Or.

Discipline is a term without much currency in contemporary cinema, and the formal clarity of Hou's film is certainly at odds with fashion. Just over two hours long, *Flowers of Shanghai* is divided into scenes lasting two or three minutes, each fading elegantly in and out.

All the action takes place within the shuttered drawing and dining rooms of four of

the flower houses. The camera is virtually fixed, moving only a few degrees from side to side. There is a minimal infusion of delicate incidental music, written for violin, harp, and hand-drum.

The film is an extended chamber piece, its main theme the relationship between Wang Liansheng (Vivay Leung), a civil servant, and a flower girl called Crispin (Michiko Hada, a Japanese actress).

Wang has been Crispin's chief patron for several years, but an interest in another girl draws him away. Other flower girls are played by Carina Lau and Michele Monique Reis, both familiar from the work of Wong Kar-Wai.

The houses are dark, but washed with a rich golden light. Costumes, make-up and props are exquisite. But for all the period detail, there is a genuine spontaneity in the emotions. This may not be Nil By Mouth, but the scenes between Wang and Crispin convey a touching modernity — or, more accurately, a timelessness — as Leung's anguished stillness confronts the pathos of Hada's gaze.

Some critics, resisting the repetitive cadence and the limited emotional range, walked out before halfway. Had they stayed, they might have felt differently, for the drama builds in the second hour. When it ended, some of us sat staring at the untranslated Chinese credits. I didn't want it to be over. I didn't want to have to stop breathing the film's air. I wanted to go out and start a fan club for it, to tell you the truth.

This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

Charter aircraft overshoots

Amelia Gentlesman

A PLANKLOAD of British tourists was treated for shock and minor injuries yesterday after an aircraft overshoot the runway on landing at Ibiza, narrowly missing crashing on to a main road.

The charter flight from Manchester had problems braking as it landed on the Mediterranean island at 2am. After overshooting, the pilot

had to swerve the aircraft sharply on to grass to avoid running on to the road.

The 180 passengers and seven crew evacuated the plane through escape chutes. Seventeen passengers were treated for cuts and bruises, and the remainder for shock.

One woman remained in hospital last night, having suffered an asthma attack.

An investigation has been mounted by the airline, Leisure Air.

Indonesians celebrate end of 32-year reign but scepticism greets new president's reform pledges

Suharto goes with a whisper

Andrew Higgins in Jakarta

AFTER 32 years in power, President Suharto yesterday took barely three minutes to make his exit, finally uttering in a soft voice at his palace the words clamoured for so loudly on the streets across a country of more than 200 million people: "I have decided to step down as the president of Indonesia, effective today."

Asking for forgiveness for "any mistakes or shortcomings", in a speech televised live from the presidential mansion in central Jakarta, Asia's longest serving ruler followed Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines and the Shah of Iran and acknowledged that tanks and troops could no longer sustain a regime deserted by even its most stalwart allies.

Momentarily later, his vice-president, Bachrudin Jusuf, a German-trained aeronautical engineer aged 61, was sworn in as Indonesia's new leader — only the third since the country de-

clared independence from the Netherlands in 1945. But unlike Mr Suharto's ascent in 1966, which launched a so-called New Order, the swearing in of Mr Habibie initiates an uncertain interlude rather than a new reign.

"I am keenly aware that this is an enormous challenge," Mr Habibie said last night in a television address to the country. A diminutive figure, he seemed almost lost in a large gold chair occupied for so long by Mr Suharto.

Describing demands for reform as a "fresh current that is carrying us forward into the 21st century", he endorsed the students' call for an end to "corruption, collusion and nepotism", but bailed the men they blame for such ills as the "core of the success of our development".

Though endorsed immediately after his swearing in by the head of the Indonesian armed forces, General Wiranto, Mr Habibie could quickly falter under the weight of his stated commitment to reform with his loyalties to his predecessor, aged 76. He inherits a regime traumatised

by last week's near anarchy in Jakarta, ravaged by economic crisis and abandoned by its ruling party and the United States.

Mr Suharto's resignation was welcomed by students encamped in the national parliament building. But they quickly refocused their anger on his replacement.

"Habibie's mission is to save Suharto, not the

'Habibie's mission is to save Suharto, not the country. It will be hopeless so long as he is in the presidential suite'

country," said Roy Simangunsong, an economics undergraduate. "It will be hopeless so long as Habibie is in the presidential suite." Many students want to stay in the parliament until he quits.

The resignation of Suharto was enough for some. Nanang Nasrudin, aged 23, who had taken a vow to shave his head as soon as the former general stepped down, took a disposable razor to his head. "I'm

now bald. It will take three months to grow back. But at least it will be a new generation of hair," he said.

At the city's biggest mosque, Dadang, a veteran of the 1966 student unrest that toppled Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno, and brought Suharto to power, said: "This is our new independence day, independence from Suharto. Before I pro-

tested for Suharto, but he has changed."

With the exit of Mr Suharto also went the malignant mood gripping a city that only a week before had slid into an orgy of looting, and which on Wednesday saw the biggest military deployment in an Asian capital since the Chinese army blasted its way into Tiananmen Square.

Troops were still out in force, but mostly lounged in

the sun, read newspapers and even shared in the celebrations. Wooden batons replaced guns, though heavily armed soldiers still blocked entry to Merdeka (Liberty) Square near the presidential palace, and unsmiling special forces stood guard around Mr Suharto's family home.

Most in need of protection are the former president's six children, the most conspicuous beneficiaries of Indonesia's "crony capitalism". One child, Hutomo "Tommy" Madala Putra, was reported to be "taking a vacation" in New Zealand.

Amien Rais, an Islamic leader and scholar who took charge of the unruly campaign to unseat Mr Suharto, reserved judgement on the new leadership. He said he wanted to first see whether Mr Habibie's new cabinet "consists of corrupt people" and "stinks of nepotism".

At the occupied parliament, though, there was no such patience. Vans streamed in from across the city carrying food for the students. "Prosecute Suharto" and "Seize Suharto's wealth", read slogans plastered across their back windows.

With Mr Suharto gone, a movement for change that acquired its potency from the rage of slum-dwellers rampaging through the streets was suddenly embraced by middle-class housewives, professionals and even socialites, who a day before had been sheltering in their walled suburban ghettos. The impoverished were mostly too busy surviving.

Across the road of a shopping centre gutted by last week's mayhem, Sathima, an unemployed migrant worker from central Java, hunted for his next meal in piles of rubbish. President Suharto had been gone for eight hours but he had not heard the news. Sathima earns 30,000 rupiah (less than £2) a month from the occasional odd job. "All I know is that I can't afford cigarettes any more," he said. He was too scared to join last week's looting but hoped to benefit from the destruction: he might get work cleaning away the rubble.

Nothing will change, page 9

Boy shoots 18 at school after killing his parents

continued from page 1

arrested soon after the shooting and is being questioned by police.

"He always said that it would be fun to kill someone and do stuff like that," said student Robbie Johnson, who knew the suspect. "Yesterday, he told a couple of people he was probably going to do something stupid today and get back at the people who had expelled him."

Oregon state has no minimum age preventing juveniles from being treated as adults in serious crimes, and the boy could face decades in prison.

In many schools across the US, especially in the inner cities, children have to pass through airport-style metal detectors, and armed police patrol some grounds.

A few criminologists have warned of a new wave of crime involving juveniles which could erode recent reports of a decline in crime in the US. But in a typical response, one legal analyst, Wendy Murphy, spoke in psychological terms about the crisis. "We are not teaching children how to resolve their anger and violence in a non-confrontational way," she said. The availability of guns was hardly mentioned.

A gun control organisation in Washington gave Oregon a "D" for its efforts to protect schoolchildren from violence.



A wounded student is carried to an ambulance. Seventeen were injured and one died in the attack. PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL CARTER

Train driver mother wins landmark sex bias case

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

A SINGLE mother who had to choose between being a "train driver or a mum" won a landmark sex discrimination victory in the Court of Appeal yesterday.

Three judges ruled that London Underground unlawfully discriminated against Susan Edwards, a driver, when a new roster system forced her to quit her job because it would have been impossible for her to look after her young son. Damages will be assessed later, but could be up to £200,000.

"They introduced seven-day variable shifts and there was no way child care could be arranged around such a shift pattern," said Ms Edwards. "There would have been periods when I would have gone for 11 days without seeing my son except asleep."

Ms Edwards, from Hounslow, west London, said she had given up her £17,000-a-year job after her boss told her she could be "a train driver or a mum". Only 21 drivers were women, compared with 2,033 men.

The decision will have far-reaching implications for working mothers and others with caring responsibilities. Alan Lakin, chief legal adviser to the Equal Opportunities Commission, which backed the case, said: "It means that in future if an employer proposes to rearrange working patterns to any significant extent, he needs to consider whether it gives rise to discrimination."

The ruling means that employers will not be able to impose new work requirements which affect one sex more than the other. The judgment



Susan Edwards and son Charlie. PHOTOGRAPH: KIPPA MATTHEWS

would also cover carers looking after relatives.

Ms Edwards said she was "delighted" with her success after a six-year battle. She first won her case in an industrial tribunal in 1995, but London Underground appealed. She won again in the employment appeal tribunal but again the company appealed. Yesterday it was refused leave to appeal by the Court of Appeal, but it can still ask the Lords for leave.

Ms Edwards, now aged 39, joined London Underground in 1983 as a guard and was promoted to driver in 1987, the same year her son Charlie was born. For five years she managed to combine work with looking after him.

Male drivers swapped shifts with her so she could work day shifts. Under the new system, introduced in 1992, she would have had to work unsocial hours, and could not have cared for her son.

The appeal judges ruled the new shift system amounted to

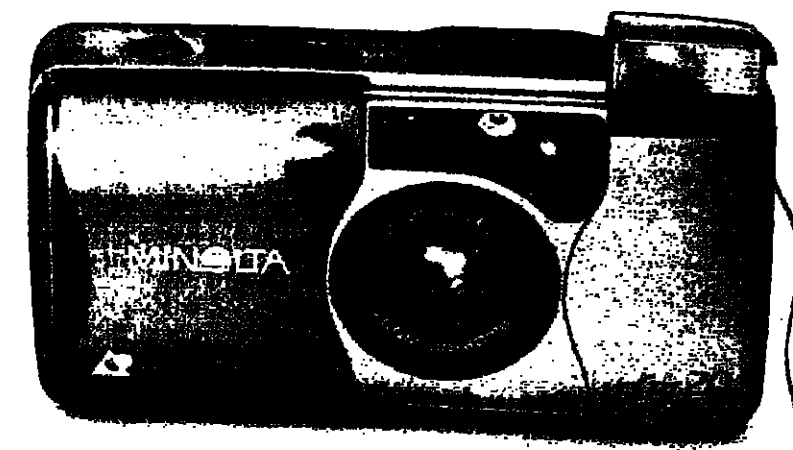
discrimination because it had a far greater impact on women than men, because more women than men had responsibility for children.

London Underground had argued that because all the women drivers apart from Ms Edwards had accepted the new roster, it could not be argued that they disadvantaged "considerably" more women than men. But the judges held that it was open for the industrial tribunal to use its own judgment and common sense about the difficulties facing women.

Ms Edwards said: "I am delighted that after all these years the court has upheld my claim that I was unlawfully discriminated against."

The Maternity Alliance's legal officer, Joanna Wade, said: "This is a significant step towards a legal right to baby-friendly workplaces. Many women give up their jobs rather than struggle through the minefield of sex discrimination legislation."

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McLauchlan (above) is due to appear at Dundee sheriff court on June 18 to face a criminal charge over the 1996 theft of £1,740 from a terminally ill Aids patient's credit card. This was the reason she sought work in Saudi Arabia



Deborah Parry, her head covered in a black shawl, leaves Gatwick airport early yesterday after being freed with Lucille McLauchlan from a Saudi prison. PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENEN



Parry (above) says she and McLauchlan were sexually molested and beaten into confessing. 'They burned my eyes with cigarettes, hitting me across the throat, and at the end of those five days it was easier to say we had done that'

Released nurses may be struck off

Stuart Miller

THE two nurses freed from prison in Saudi Arabia were last night facing a fresh investigation into the murder allegations against them that could lead to them being struck off the British nursing register. In what could, in effect, amount to the case being tried again, the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing was preparing to launch an investigation into Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan after receiving a formal complaint against them from the Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, George Galloway.

He said it was in the public interest that the body which oversees professional standards should act. Until then, the women who arrived back in Britain yesterday could not be considered fit to practice nursing in this country.

Although Parry and McLauchlan were released after King Fahd commuted their sentences, their convictions following the murder of the Australian nurse Yvonne Gifford still stand.

If the nurses had been convicted of any offence in a British court, the UKCC, which spent two days discussing their case with its lawyers, would have been informed automatically by the Home Office and would have been entitled to take action.

About 30 per cent of com-

plaints to the UKCC arise in this way. It has the power to suspend a nurse awaiting trial and, after conviction for a serious offence, can remove a nurse from the register, barring him or her from practising. But it has no power to act in cases involving convictions abroad, unless a formal complaint is received. Nor can it act on the fact that there has been a conviction. It is obliged to gather its own evidence, which goes before a hearing with the same standard of proof as a criminal court.

'We will have to investigate the case from scratch,' a UKCC spokesman said. 'In previous convictions abroad, we effectively have had to retrace the case as part of our professional conduct investigation.'

In his letter, Mr Galloway, who has complained to the Press Complaints Commission about the nurses, have struck with the Mirror and Express newspapers, urged the UKCC also to take full account of allegations by the women that they were abused by the Saudi authorities and forced to make false confessions.

He told the Guardian: 'Notwithstanding any opposition I have to the regime in Saudi Arabia, the facts are that the evidence against these women is extremely powerful and serious. Even though the conviction occurred abroad it is nonetheless a conviction and should at the very least be investigated before they

are allowed to practise as nurses.'

Neither woman's solicitor could be contacted for comment last night, but in a television interview, Parry maintained she and McLauchlan had been sexually molested and beaten into confessing to the murder by Saudi police.

'They burned my eyes with cigarettes, hitting me across the throat and at the end of those four or five days it was easier to say we had done that. Also the embassy had been turned away until we confessed,' she told the BBC Panorama programme.

Asked how it felt to be back, she said: 'Wonderful, absolutely brilliant. It just feels so unreal still, it's like a dream. I can't say how pleased I am to see everyone again and ... but it's very hard as well because reality is setting in.'

'I've been safe in a way in a prison [and now] all of a sudden I've got to come back to England and face all these questions and newspapers, and it's been a bit of a problem today.'

The first step for the UKCC will be for its professional conduct department to decide whether the women should be suspended from the register pending the investigation.

It may wait until after June 18, when McLauchlan is due to appear at Dundee Sheriff Court to face a criminal charge over the 1996 theft of £1,740 from a terminally ill Aids patient's credit card. This was the reason she sought work in Saudi Arabia.

Free to spend more time with the tabloids

Luke Harding

IT WAS the most ignominious of returns. A vast press pack had gathered with the dawn on a large roof terrace overlooking Gatwick airport's main runway.

At 5.35am the British Airways Boeing 777 touched down. Inside the plane Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan — who had breakfasted on pancakes and scrambled eggs — got ready for their first, equivocal taste of freedom back in Britain.

Parry, according to her solicitor, was 'exhausted'.



Deborah Parry's sister braves the media scrum at Gatwick

She was too tired to speak to the waiting media. She just wanted to be with her family.

This was not strictly true. In fact, she wanted to be with several reporters from the Express, who had paid around £125,000 for her story. The same was true of McLauchlan. Her reunion with the Mirror, which had sent a huge team to secure the paper's six-figure exclusive.

After disembarking from the plane the two women, looking tired and thin, were whisked away to an airport hospitality suite, the Sussex. There, Parry was reunited with her sister and brother-in-law, Jonathan Ashbee. Outside, a massive press pack had gathered. A game of tabloid subterfuge between rival newspapers was played out.

The Mirror removed McLauchlan from the airport by helicopter, her destination apparently Scotland. The Express had less foresight. At around 7am Parry emerged from the suite with a hood over her head and was bundled into the back of a black Range Rover by Express reporter John Oakes. 'Did you murder her, Deborah?' several reporters shouted. There was no reply. An Express executive, Ian Walker, fol-

lowed in a second car, with Parry's brother-in-law, Jonathan Ashbee. The convoy drove off, pursued by other vehicles. It was hardly a heroine's welcome.

In a ground-floor media suite nearby, the women's solicitors Roger Pannone, for Parry, and Peter Watson, for McLauchlan, were putting the best spin they could on their clients' return. Would he be commenting on the fact that Parry had sold her story? 'Certainly not,' Mr Pannone replied. 'We had nothing to do with that.'

'Miss Parry is relieved to be home. She is physically and emotionally exhausted and wishes only now to be with her family. The events of the last year and five months have been devastating. She maintains her total and absolute innocence of the charges and hopes in due course to be able to demonstrate that total innocence.'

Mr Pannone said Parry wanted to thank the King of Saudi Arabia for his decision to free her, and said she had been sustained and helped by the British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and several consular officials. She also said the Foreign Office had been tremendously helpful — in particular the Foreign Secretary — as had the FO minister Baroness Symons, and Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Britain, Ghazi Algosaili.

What followed was a bitter attack on the Saudi policemen who allegedly forced the two women to confess. 'Saudi Arabia is an important country and Islam is one of the world's great religions,' Mr Pannone said. 'Deborah respects the laws of Islam and has no criticism of the overwhelming majority of citizens of Saudi Arabia.'

'She does have an abhorrence of the treatment she received at the hands of certain members of the Saudi police, and her inability to have a full and open trial. It is not an attack on Saudi Arabia, nor the religion of Islam, to say within Saudi Arabia there are those officers who have behaved abominably.'

He added: 'Saudi Arabia is not different from many Western countries, including our own, who have experienced the corruption of a very small minority of their police officers. An open trial system is one effective way of minimising the harm that such officers can perpetrate.'

In effect resigning from the Parry case, Mr Pannone said it was now up to others — presumably the Express — to demonstrate her innocence.

Mr Watson did not claim that McLauchlan had been wrongly convicted. His aim had simply been to 'bring the girls home'. 'Now we are signing off. Mission accomplished,' he said.

Gates windfall from US legal action

Retailers send 'thank you' notes to government lawyer as publicity leads to Windows 98 sales boom

Mark Tran in New York

BILL GATES just cannot stop making money. Far from curtailing his march to world domination, the US Justice Department's decision to take Microsoft to court for abusing its monopoly power has only served to drum up more business for the multi-billionaire.

Consumer retailers in the United States yesterday reported a surge in demand for Mr Gates's product.

Legal action to restrict his company's penetration of the Internet browser market seems to have convinced com-

sumers that Microsoft has produced an advance in software they cannot afford to be without.

'The government has created more demand for Windows 98 than could ever have been generated by a marketing programme,' said Lawrence Mendry, an executive vice president of CompUSA, America's largest chain of computer stores.

Computer City, another large chain of computer shops, has also reported that advance sales of computers loaded with Windows 98, which will go on sale on June 25, have 'vastly exceeded' the company's expectations.

The case has received massive coverage in newspapers and on television since Monday when the Justice Department took on Mr Gates, founder of Microsoft, and Windows 98 has been shown with free publicity in the past few days.

The assistant attorney-general, Joel Klein, who is leading the case against Microsoft, has become the unlikely toast of computer salesmen around the country, many of whom have sent him thank you notes as their businesses have surged.

But their joy may not be unconfined, depending on how the judge views the Justice

Department's application for a preliminary injunction. If the state is successful, all copies of Windows 98 (which began to be shipped to computer hardware manufacturers on Monday, the same day as the legal action was launched) would have to be modified.

Either Microsoft's Internet browser, called Explorer, would have to be taken out of the package, or its main rival, Netscape's Navigator, would have to be included.

The government insists that the modifications could be made virtually overnight. But all the computers which had been sent to retailers would have to have a software update, creating more chaos for the already confused consumers.

Letters, page 13; Microsoft make Sega deal, page 15

Euro note printing plate stolen

Dan Atkinson

THE highly contentious design of the euro may have to be abandoned following the mysterious disappearance of the vital printing plate that was to be used to stamp security holograms on the new notes.

Investigators are trying to trace the whereabouts of the unique design after it went missing 'somewhere between Paris and Munich'.

The master-plate for the high-value hologram disappeared from Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris en route to the first large-scale test production-run for the new currency at a high-security printer in Germany.

The authorities are baffled by the crime. One theory even suggests that an anti-single currency political group may

have stolen the plate for nuisance value.

Wherever they were, the criminals must have known that the hologram would be scrapped once they stole it, rendering the plate worthless for forgery purposes.

The European Union will now probably once again have to change the design on its high-denomination bank notes — which are due to be issued in 2002 — because the security hologram is an integral part of the new currency.

Designing the notes for the single currency has been a long and tortuous process. The design has been honed and reworked on many occasions as the EU tried to avoid upsetting national sensibilities.

The time-consuming process involved 44 design proposals on the shortlist alone. Experts whittled the list down

to 10 designs from which members of the European Monetary Institute and Europe's embryonic central bank — made their choices.

An earlier embarrassment came for Eurocrats when they had to scrap the original note designs carrying vague architectural motifs because they were not as vague as everybody supposed.

Despite months of deliberation involving all 12 members of the European Union, nobody had noticed that three of the notes — which were supposed to be neutral and 'should not be attributed to any particular monument in any single country' — depicted some of Europe's most famous bridges. Another of the notes showed a pontoon bridge from India — not known to be applying for EU membership.

One industry source said

yesterday that the extensive and exhausting consultation process could 'back to square one', at huge expense to the taxpayers of Europe.

And, given the long run-up period needed to ensure widely differing national printing processes are brought into line with a uniform euro-standard, the mystery theft could even threaten to delay the launch of the euro.

Although the stolen hologram was to be used only on high-value euro notes, all notes will carry holograms and the holograms share a common theme. That means all euro-note holograms are now compromised.

David Tidmarsh, chief executive of Britain's Applied Holographics, said he was 'amazed and appalled' that the plate had been uncompromised at the airport.

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Dan Glaister reports on the proposed £6.7bn purchase of PolyGram by the US giant Seagram, which could lead to its dismemberment

Sale threat to British film industry

THE company that produced the jewels in the crown of the recent revival of the British film industry is in danger of being shut down if a proposed buy-out goes through as expected today.

Film industry insiders are warning that the sale of PolyGram, which includes Working Title, could endanger the revival of the industry.

PolyGram, the company that made *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Bean*, and *Trainspotting*, will almost certainly be sold to the North American group Seagram for about \$6.7 billion.

The PolyGram board met in New York yesterday after a board meeting of PolyGram's owners, the Dutch electronics group Philips, on Tuesday. An announcement could come today.

But Seagram is not buying PolyGram for its film expertise. It already owns Universal Studios and is interested in PolyGram's music division.

The danger is that PolyGram film operations will be dismantled, with some parts absorbed into Universal, some sold off separately, and others simply shut down. An alternative is that all of PolyGram's film operations will be sold to one buyer, with the French cable TV group Canal Plus emerging as the most likely bidder.

"It would be a big loss," said the film director and British Film Institute chairman, Alan Parker, in Cannes yesterday. "PolyGram is a huge part of the British film renaissance."

PolyGram Filmed Entertainment (PFE) was created by Michael Kohn and Stewart Tull, the two best British film executives we've had for years.

Sally Hibbin of the production company Parallax, responsible for Ken Loach's

films, among others, said: "The UK distribution arm of PolyGram has been the most innovative and interesting distribution operation in the UK for a long time. It has stood halfway between the US majors and the independent sector. It would be tragic if we lost it."

But as well as the distribution arm of PolyGram, its production activities are also under threat.

Working Title, the wholly-owned PolyGram subsidiary responsible for *Bean*, *Four Weddings*, and *Fargo*, could disappear, although it is more likely it will be snapped up by another studio such as Stephen Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG. Tim Bevan and Eric Fellner, co-chairs of

'PolyGram is a huge part of the British film renaissance'

Working Title, did not renew their contracts with PolyGram when they expired recently, suggesting some advance knowledge of a takeover.

It is also rumoured that Mr Tull, PFE's chief executive, went to New York two months ago to try to mount a management buy-out of the company. More recent attempts to stage a management buy-out have emerged since Seagram and Philips confirmed they were discussing the sale of PolyGram. These attempts are understood to have broken down. The most likely European buyer, should Seagram decide to sell PFE intact would seem to be Canal Plus, understood to be keen to move into film.

Its chief executive Pierre Lescure said this week: "Anything that can prevent PolyGram films from falling under American control is worth backing. We are ready to study a European solution if there is the opportunity for a separate sale."

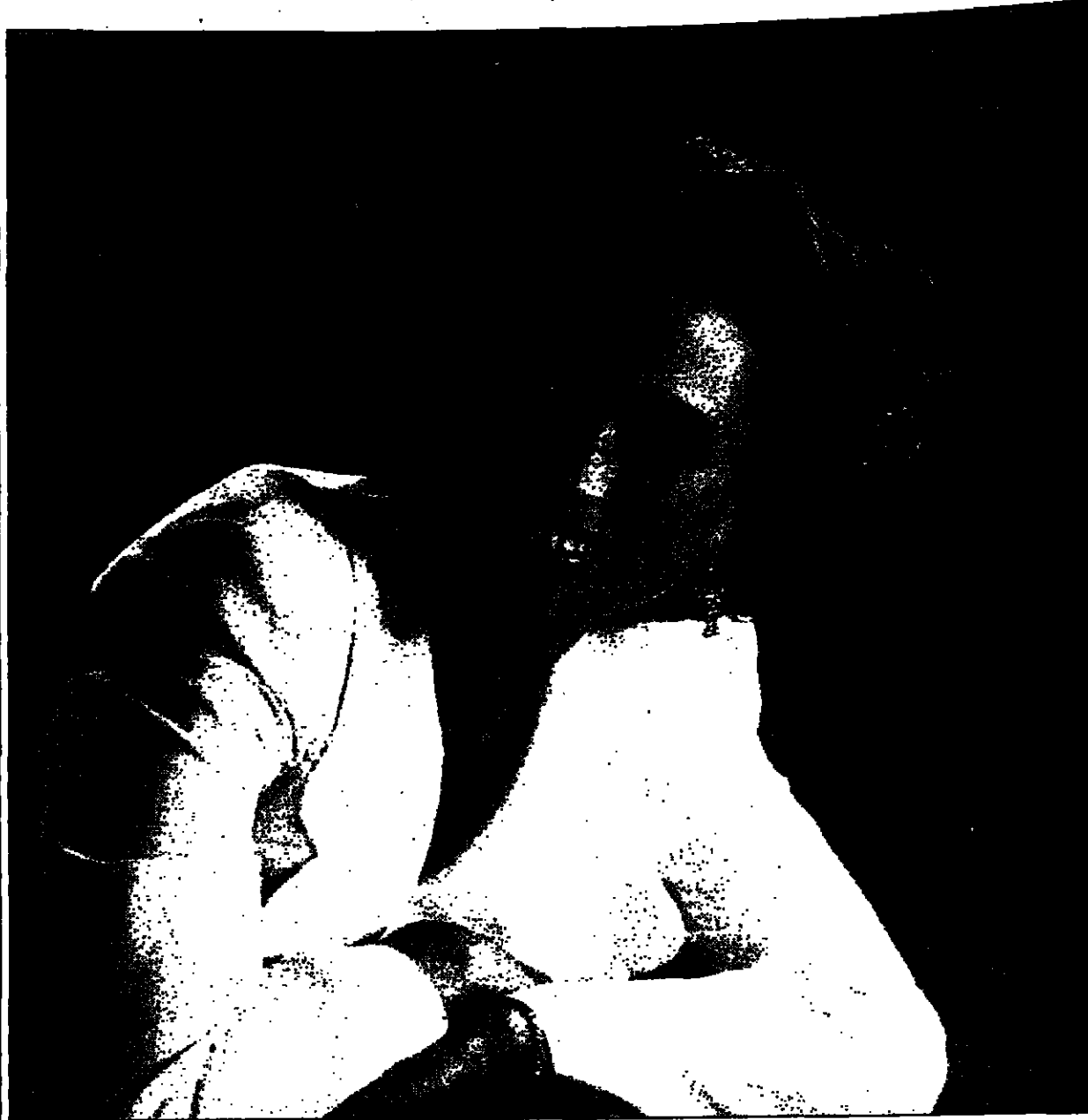
Some analysts suggest Seagram will be happy to sell PolyGram films to a European buyer to avoid political fall-out. Moves by a North American company to buy and then close one of Europe's leading film companies could leave Seagram vulnerable to charges of cultural imperialism.

Philips has been accused of opportunism in deciding to sell a subsidiary to which it had previously expressed long-term commitment. Although PolyGram itself is profitable, PFE has made losses reflecting the investment made by the company in building up its film operation. In 1997 PolyGram was by far the biggest British-based investor in British films, putting \$86.9 million (about £53 million) into 14 films. Channel 4 spent just \$28.7 million in the same period. PolyGram films is expected to move into profit this year.

Mr Parker said: "We've always pretended that PolyGram is British when it is Dutch. That has now been proved to us. It is amazing it has been allowed to happen so quickly. Why is no one screaming and shouting? Why have neither the British nor the Dutch governments said anything?"

A Department of Culture spokesman said last night: "We see no reason why any new owners should not continue to develop PolyGram's thriving production and distribution business."

Investment was welcome whatever its source.



PolyGram's successes include *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (above), *Trainspotting* (below), *Bean*, and *SpiceWorld*



PolyGram's greatest hits, with box office takings worldwide:

1. *Four Weddings and a Funeral* — £128 million. Richard Curtis's comedy, which launched the career of Hugh Grant
2. *Bean* — £123 million. The ultimate disaster movie: Rowan Atkinson stretched his rubbery face to fill a feature-length film about accident-prone Mr Bean
3. *Sleepers* — £22 million. Barry Levinson's disturbing film of young offenders who seek revenge on the prison officer who abused them as children
4. *Nell* — £48 million. Critically unsuccessful drama with Jodie Foster as a woman who speaks a language incomprehensible to everyone except her and her (dead) mother
5. *The Game* — £41 million. Sinister psychological thriller starring Michael Douglas as an investment banker and Sean Penn as his brother
6. *French Kiss* — £37 million. Meg Ryan played the dizzy blonde who finds romance in the form of French thief Kevin Kline
7. *Trainspotting* — £26 million. Groundbreaking Scottish drama which explored the highs and lows of heroin addiction, catapulting Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle to fame
8. *Dead Man Walking* — £30 million. Susan Sarandon won an Oscar for her portrayal of a Catholic nun who persuades Death Row convict Sean Penn to repent
9. *SpiceWorld: the movie* — £25 million. Spice Girls go mad on double-decker bus
10. *The Usual Suspects* — £24 million. Clever, tight heist movie with a top twist, starring Kevin Spacey

Warning of profit collapse made Philips decide to sell

Lisa Buckingham on why the parent companies have decided to move

EDGAR Bronfman's drinks and entertainment giant, Seagram, already owns Universal Studios and MCA.

The PolyGram deal comes less than a fortnight after Seagram walked out of takeover talks with British record company EMI, which would have given it a portfolio of stars including the Beatles and Blur.

An auction for PolyGram was triggered when the Dutch electronics giant, Philips, said it wanted to sell its 75 per cent stake. Al-

though music has been a steady earner and used to be regarded as essential for Philips to sell hi-fi systems, PolyGram's adventurous film business has never made a profit despite earning critical acclaim.

Investors in Philips have become increasingly disenchanted with the rollercoaster performance of the group's Tin Pan Alley venture.

A warning this year of a profits collapse from the music company which also produces artists such as El-

ton John and has record labels such as Motown, appears to have hardened Philips's resolve to seek the exit. Financial meltdown in Asia has hit sales even in the world's second biggest music market, Japan. Competition in the US, which accounts for nearly a third of all sales, has devastated the business of PolyGram and its rivals.

Mr Bronfman has been struggling to vindicate an earlier foray into music and film which investors in the family business have criticised. The addition of PolyGram should allow him to cut some costs and offset the soaring price of luring top stars to the group's record labels.

The deal will mean nearly two-thirds of Seagram's revenues come from the entertainment business after its existing MCA music and Universal Studios film companies' earnings are taken into account. Total revenues will rise to \$19 billion a year once the group has incorporated artists such as the Hanson brothers and other labels like Island.

Reports suggest Seagram might look to sell its Tropicana fruit juice business to help pay for the deal.

Rail companies ordered to spend £250 million on safety

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK and the train operating companies were yesterday ordered to spend £250 million in safety improvements to protect the public and prevent accidents.

The measures demanded by the railway inspectorate will include fitting trains with a

new automatic braking system, though not the advanced train protection system (ATP), and the gradual withdrawal of 1,200 slam door carriages over the next nine years.

The improvements fall short of the £1 billion of safety improvements recommended after the rail disaster at Clapham, London, in 1988. But Frank Davis, chairman of the Health and Safety Commis-

sion, said the public would not be getting "safety on the cheap".

The railway inspectorate had been forced to act because of the "disappointing" response by Railtrack and the companies to demands to improve safety, he said. They have until August to approve the plans.

The HSC acted after concern about rail safety from

the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, to senior rail managers and union leaders.

But passenger watchdogs may accuse it of not forcing the industry to spend enough.

Jimmy Knapp, of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union, said: "These measures fall far short of what is needed. We are concerned that cost again is the inhibiting factor."

Get-rich computer buff scores own goal with enterprising shot at Net

Antella Gentlemen

BRIAN Paed thought he had found the effortless way to make a million. His get-rich quick scheme was simple. Just register the names of the Premier League football clubs as sites on the Internet — and then sell them back to the clubs.

It would cost £120 to register

each name. But profit margins would be high. In fact, Mr Paed, a schoolteacher, understood to have tried to sell Sheffield Wednesday's site to the team for £95,000. In all, he looked set to rake in about £1.7 million.

But he had not anticipated the defensive tactics of the Premier League. The league has now issued a High Court writ seeking an injunction to

prevent Mr Paed using the trademarks or names, and is threatening to sue for damages on behalf of 17 clubs.

The clubs, which include Arsenal, Tottenham and West Ham, are "greedy" according to Mr Paed. "Everything I have done is completely legal. I've got in before the football clubs by registering their names on the Internet. They can set up another website if

they want to but I legally own the websites."

Ivan Popes, director of NetNames, a site-registering company, said: "A few years ago it was possible to make money out of schemes like this, but the legal profession is getting wise to it. There are test cases where courts have come down quite heavily on people who try to hold companies to ransom like this."

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Radiation study 'upset bereaved parents'

Sarah Boseley
Health correspondent

THE committee investigating the ethical conduct of scientists involved in radiation experiments on humans in the 1950s and 1960s was appalled by one of its findings, its chairwoman, Julia Neuberger, said yesterday.

Most of the research in six studies was acceptable by the standards of the time but would never be permitted today, the committee concluded.

committee concluded, "In one project in the mid-1950s in North Wales, scientists refused to return the bodies of children who had died of various causes to their parents after post mortems because they had, without permission, removed bones for radiation testing. The committee found that parents had been caused distress and confusion. "I find it mind-blowing that this could take place," Rabbi Neuberger said.

The project, designed by the UK Atomic Energy Authority to monitor the amount of Strontium-90 in human bone, was commissioned by the government because of public fears of the effect of fallout from nuclear testing around the world. It also looked at radiation levels in air, rain-water and the human diet.

The committee was set up by the Medical Research Council after a Channel 4 documentary in 1995. Jean Pritchard, mother of one of the dead children, said on camera that she had asked if she could dress her daughter in her christening robe for burial. The request was de-

mied. The two women featured in the documentary had not known why their children's bodies were kept away from them until they were contacted by TV researchers.

In other experiments pregnant women were given doses of radioactive iodine to measure thyroid changes. The committee's report has called for a further study to look at the increase in cancers in Grampian, Scotland, after one such study in Aberdeen.

Although the risks were extremely small, the report said, such work could help to reassure local people.

In the Aberdeen study, as in others, the committee found that women who took part were given little information, had not signed a consent form and were not told the outcome of the research. Kathleen Morrison and Loretta Tennant told the inquiry that they were not at first aware that they were swallowing radioactive material, or that testing would continue after they gave birth.

"The committee did find an attitude among some researchers that regarded participants as dispensable, who did not need to be informed, thanked or kept in touch in any way," the report said.

"This may still be as true in the 1990s as it was in the 1950s and 1960s, and it is this concern which the committee would like to voice not only to the MRC but to the wider research community."

It recommended that long-term records of participation in research be kept and be easily accessible to those involved, and that notes be made in GPs' medical files.

Unruly children 'misunderstood'

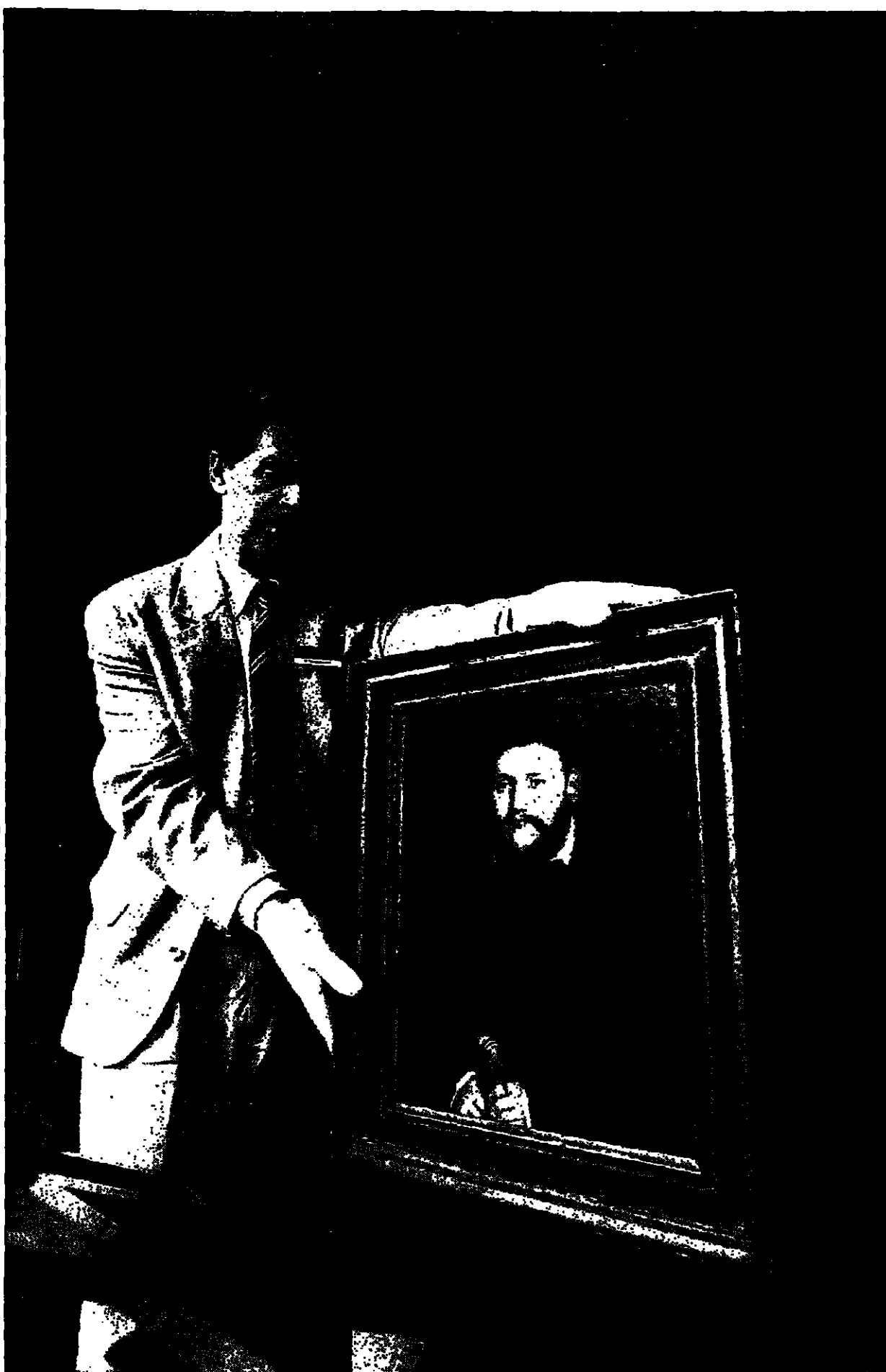
CHILDREN who are unruly because of a misunderstood brain disorder are badly undertreated in Britain, a paediatrician claims.

Geoffrey Kewley, of the Learning Assessment Centre in Horsham, West Sussex, writing in the British Medical Journal yesterday, said the uncontrolled behaviour of children with the condition was often blamed on poor parenting. Yet without effective treatment the children were

at greater risk of becoming involved in criminal activity.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder was misunderstood and under-recognised in Britain, although research indicated a likely genetic component and physical dysfunction.

He said that in 1995 only about 0.03 per cent of British schoolchildren (about 6,000) were treated for the disorder, although up to 1 per cent suffered the condition.



Painted in 1540, Portrait of an Unknown Man, by Hans Holbein the Younger, was returned yesterday to its old home, Audley End, Essex. It was bought by English Heritage and goes on public show for the first time in 40 years. PHOTOGRAPH GARRY WEASER

News in brief

Animal shelter raid finds charnel house

RSPCA inspectors found the rotting carcasses of more than 130 animals at an animal sanctuary in Crewe, Cheshire. Police raided two flats and a four-up garage after a neighbour became anxious about a dog howling in a shed. Ann Stott, aged 56, the owner of the Crewe Animal Sanctuary, was arrested but released on bail after questioning. The RSPCA said the shelter was not a registered charity but had taken in a very large number of cats, dogs and birds. Post mortems on some 50 carcasses, including a dog, a cat and a bird, had been carried out. Fifteen dogs and six cats were taken for treatment or returned to their owners. — *Martin Wainwright*

Fertility treatment 'risk'

A TECHNIQUE that allows infertile men to be fathers may impair the mental development of their children, research suggests. The treatment involves injecting a single sperm cell directly into a female egg, bypassing natural selection and virtually guaranteeing fertilisation.

Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) is thought to have produced tens of thousands of children since it was introduced in 1993. But researchers in Australia today publish findings in the *Lancet* suggesting ICSI children have a 17 per cent chance of suffering delayed mental development by the time they are one.

A team led by Jennifer Bowen, from the Royal North Shore hospital, at St Leonard's in New South Wales, compared 86 ICSI children with 84 children born after routine in vitro fertilisation and 80 conceived naturally. Only 2 per cent of the IVF children showed "mildly or significantly delayed development" at one, and 1 per cent of children conceived naturally.

Python wins back Brian

THE Monty Python comedy team has won back the rights to its film *The Life of Brian* — 20 years after its release. Mr Justice Raftery ruled in the High Court that deals struck between the film distributor, Paragon Entertainment Corporation of Canada, and Channel 4 television suppressed the true value of one of the most successful British movies. Python intends to sue Channel 4, which paid \$100,000 for the film in a package, for damages.

Paragon bought the film rights for \$8 million in 1994 from George Harrison's Handmade Films. Although the Python team had agreed to hand over the copyright of the screenplay to Handmade, Python had the right to assess sales and make any necessary cuts. Mr Justice Rattee found these terms had been broken in 1994 and therefore Paragon lost all rights.

Second post mortem

A PATHOLOGIST in Lancashire yesterday carried out a second post mortem on Karen Murray, aged 19, of Southport, who died last week after collapsing with stomach pains while on holiday on Corfu. The first post mortem, by a Greek, doctor found surgical gauze and four plastic clips in Ms Murray's body. The cause of death was given as intestinal obstruction.

A spokeswoman for the coroner's office in Southport said the findings of the Chorley-based Home Office pathologist had been "withheld for further inquiries". This week Alder Hey children's hospital in Liverpool disclosed that Ms Murray had had surgery there eight years ago for what is thought to have been a bowel disorder. An inquest will be held. — *David Ward.*

Soldier fights detective

ONE of three British soldiers convicted of kidnapping and killing a Danish tour guide in Corfu four years ago is fighting to prevent a private London detective being allowed to give evidence at their appeal, claiming he had been paid by English newspapers for the story of his time in prison with the three.

The former Royal Green Jackets were jailed for life but are appealing against their conviction and sentence. Christos Fourgides, representing Justin Fowler, aged 30, of Falmouth, at the Supreme Court in Nicosia yesterday, offered no proof that newspapers had paid money but was granted an adjournment until mid-June to make further inquiries. The prosecutor and the other men, Allan Ford, 29, of Birmingham, and Geoffrey Parnell, 27, of Oldbury, West Midlands, are in favour of hearing the detective.

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Gerry Robinson: blueprint for change

PHOTOGRAPH: GAREY WEASEL

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"There was no sign of a

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Snub to Akihito will be 'insult to the Queen'

John Ezard

The FO spokesman said: "We are very conscious that our good relationship with Japan could not exist without

Downing Street lunch. Mr Umezū said Japan's 260 British factories generated 60,000 jobs directly, and 250,000 indirectly. Meanwhile, Japanese firms in London are urging their employees to swarm into the Mall — and perhaps swamp the veterans' protest.

Sarah Hall

and shutting and the baby's grimace. It brought it home to me that I really was pregnant.

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McVicar's son guilty of Picasso shotgun robbery



Russell Grant-McVicar, who stole a \$650,000 Picasso, Tête de Femme (right), armed with a shotgun

Sarah Hall

THE son of reformed criminal John McVicar was found guilty yesterday of a catalogue of armed robberies, including the theft of a \$650,000 Picasso.

Russell Grant-McVicar, aged 33, had denied 16 charges relating to eight robberies and one attempted robbery that brought him more than £100,000 between 1983 and 1997. After the verdict was delivered at the Old Bailey, Grant-McVicar said goodbye to the jury and shook hands with the detectives who helped convict him. He is due to be sentenced today.

The 12-day trial had heard how Grant-McVicar seized the Picasso, Tête de Femme, in March last year after storming into the Lefevre gallery in Mayfair, central London, and opening a hold-up to reveal a double-barrelled shotgun. When a member of staff refused to hand over the Picasso, he wrenched it from the wall and, pointing the gun



at a cab driver who was waiting for him, fled to south London.

Within hours, he had met the cat burglar Peter Scott, aged 67, in a London park to hand him the painting. Scott, a "gentleman thief" who burgled Sophia Loren and Elizabeth Taylor in a criminal career spanning half a century, was jailed last week for 3½ years after changing his plea and admitting con-

spiracy to handle the Picasso. Scott described Grant-McVicar as a "surrogate son" during his trial, and although he had handed over the painting to an accomplice in exchange for £75,000, he insisted he had been motivated by misguided loyalty to Grant-McVicar. "I knew this man, I got close to him, cared for him and in the end, boom," Scott had told the court.

Pending the Old Bailey verdict, reporting restrictions prevented the two men being linked in any way. Grant-McVicar was referred to by a false name during Scott's trial. No direct reference to Grant-McVicar's father was made during his trial.

The jury was told that Grant-McVicar gave police "clear unambiguous and thoroughly detailed accounts of the robberies" following his arrest in Southampton last August. He said that at times he had wanted to be arrested or to give himself up, but could not bring himself to do so because of his father.

John McVicar, aged 58, became Britain's most

wanted man after a spectacular escape in 1968 while serving a 23-year sentence for armed robbery and shooting a policeman. He was only recaptured two years later. On release he became a writer and broadcaster, and turned his life story into a film starring Roger Daltrey.

When Grant-McVicar had escaped from police custody in 1993, his father told the BBC he had only seen him regularly when he was aged four to six, but people assumed he was "a chip off the old block".

"In fact his motives are entirely different. He is essentially getting back at me, I guess, for not being around in his childhood when I was in prison."

When Grant-McVicar had been jailed for cheque offences in 1988, his lawyer said: "It is very hard being the son of a famous father. The two have a strange love-hate relationship. The father blames the son for not having learned from his example, and the son blames the father for neglecting him."

Man hunted down and killed by mob on council estate

Martin Wainwright

POLICE in Manchester appealed for information yesterday about a mob of men and women who hunted down and killed a young father on a council estate.

Neighbours described yesterday how some 15 people chased Stephen Mills, aged 34, down alleys in the inner city area of Miles Platting before beating him with a baseball bat and stabbing him through the heart.

Greater Manchester police began door to door inquiries in streets round Aldworth Drive, where Mr Mills had been living alone since his partner walked out this year, taking their two young children to live nearby. He was unemployed and is understood to have living on invalidity benefit as a victim of schizophrenia.

Neighbours in Queen's Road, where windows in Mr Mills's house were smashed before the attack, said he had recently associated with a group of "real heavies", alleg-

edly involved in drug dealing and burglaries. Rumours had spread round the estate that he was involved with a gang responsible for a spate of thefts.

James Read, 30, who lives next door, said his car had been wrecked by the mob before the killing because it was parked in Mr Mills's drive. The victim's front door had been kicked in last week and a car full of people had monitored his movements when he went for a walk before the attack.

"Someone shouted 'There he is, he's coming'," said another neighbour. "Stephen ran behind a house but they went after him. One had a baseball bat and you could hear the sound of it hitting him. He got away once and started running, but they all went straight after him."

Detectives said last night no one had been arrested and they were still trying to establish the identities of people in the mob. A confidential telephone line has been opened to encourage witnesses to come forward.

All Sir Eddie Kulukundis needs is a red hat and coat and he could pass for Santa Claus. Which is, of course, exactly what the 65-year-old has been to British athletes for more than two decades.

Sport98 page 8

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Milosevic ploy may bring down his empire

Jonathan Steele

THE last rusty screws that hold what remains of Yugoslavia together are on the verge of snapping thanks to the latest power-play by the Serbian strongman, Slobodan Milosevic. While media and diplomatic attention has focused on the growing guerrilla war in Kosovo, Mr Milosevic has been using peaceful but machiavellian means to impose tight control on the neighbouring republic of Montenegro.

The small, mountainous region is the only one of former Yugoslavia's six republics left within the federation. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia walked out in 1991 and 1992.

The Yugoslav president may be about to send troops to clamp down in Montenegro.

'The decision is a blow against all of us... This is an act of breaking up Yugoslavia'

gro. But his clumsy effort to bolster Belgrade's control could lead in the end to Montenegro's independence, according to regional observers.

The game centres on parliamentary elections in Montenegro next Sunday. Mr Milosevic is trying to ensure his favourite wins. But if they do not, he wants the means to impose a state of emergency and rule by decree. It is a Byzantine struggle which moved into high gear on Monday when Mr Milosevic sacked Radoje Kontic, the prime minister of Yugoslavia.

Mr Kontic, a Montenegrin, had refused to take Mr Milosevic's side in the elections. Through state television, Mr Milosevic has been whipping up hostility towards the Montenegrin president, Milo Djukanovic, who has taken a pro-Western line since he narrowly won power last year. He defeated Momir Bulatovic, a Milosevic ally.

Using Bulatovic supporters in the federal parliament, Mr

Milosevic sacked Mr Kontic and installed Mr Bulatovic. 'The decision is a blow against all of us... This is an act of breaking up Yugoslavia', Mr Djukanovic told party members in his capital, Podgorica. They refuse to recognise the new prime minister.

Montenegro has equal status with Serbia in Yugoslavia despite having less than a tenth of Serbia's population — a mere 650,000 people. It is landlocked Serbia's gateway to Adriatic ports. During the wars with Croatia and Bosnia, Montenegro was loyal to Mr Milosevic. It allowed vicious Serb paramilitaries to operate on its territory and its troops joined the Serbs in ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

Mr Djukanovic's record was undistinguished. He was part of the Bulatovic team then and both are thought to have made undisclosed fortunes out of sanctions-busting when pressure on Yugoslavia was at its height. After the Bosnian war Mr Djukanovic saw the chance for power and formed his own party. By making the correct noises about reforming the economy, privatising state enterprises, and taking a moderate line on Kosovo, he won American support.

Washington sees him as useful in the struggle against Mr Milosevic. The federal constitution gives Montenegro equal seats in the upper house, where it can block legislation. If Mr Djukanovic's party wins next week's elections, his supporters will be able to use that power.

By getting his man in as federal prime minister before the polls, Mr Milosevic hopes to nip any such problem in the bud. If Montenegro's voters choose the wrong party, he could claim threats to state security and declare an emergency. But Serbians are unlikely to inflame passions and could inflame passions and lead to popular unrest and a declaration of independence.

This would strengthen the moves towards independence in Kosovo. The Albanian majority in what is still a Serbian province asks why Montenegro, which has a third of Kosovo's population, should have the status of a federal republic. If Montenegro goes independent, the Albanian argument will be unstoppable.



Anti-riot policemen shoot tear-gas towards Real Madrid fans in clashes at Cibeles Square, in the Spanish capital, where thousands celebrated the victory

PHOTOGRAPH BY JUAN LAVIN

Riots ruin Madrid football party

Adela Cooch in Madrid

PRIDE turned to shame yesterday after celebrations of Madrid's European Cup win degenerated into drunken riots, prompting an anguished debate about why soccer violence has become as much of a problem at home as it is abroad.

"We don't do this football violence thing," said a supporter of Real Madrid, the team that beat Italy's Juventus by one goal to nil in the final in Amsterdam on Wednesday night. "We leave it up to you British."

Around 200 people were injured in violent clashes

after police tried to block the Cibeles fountain in the city centre where Real Madrid fans traditionally celebrate victory.

Supporters, led by hardcore fans carrying Nazi memorabilia, threw stones, bottles and cans. Riot police fought back with tear-gas, bullets and batons, leading to claims that they might have provoked the fans.

The winning team's victorious homecoming last night was expected to trigger more riots. Fans defied calls for restraint by flocking to Madrid airport, bursting through barriers around the Cibeles fountain and lining the route along the main avenue to

the stadium, where a huge party had been prepared.

The celebrations had begun the night before immediately after Predrag Mijatovic scored in the 67th minute of the game. The match virtually paralysed Madrid, with cinema, bingo halls and theatres playing to near empty houses or remaining shut.

But, as soon as it ended, an estimated 500,000 Madrileños poured into the streets, clapping and hooting the horns of their cars as they made their way towards Cibeles square.

Those who stayed at home were stunned by the scenes of drunken hooligans attacking police shown later on television.

The Spanish passion for football has rarely translated into the type of soccer violence common in other countries. Soccer hooliganism has been seen as a foreign, mainly British, phenomenon and compared unfavourably with the family support traditionally enjoyed by Spanish clubs.

The exception has always been Real Madrid's hardcore group of supporters, the Ultras, who take their name from the south goal area in Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium and who are matched only by Barcelona football club's Boixos Noix (Mad Boys).

Until now, however, Ultra-led violence had been directed mainly against supporters from rival Spanish teams, such as Madrid's other main club Atletico, or Barcelona.

The Ultras combine rabid support for Real Madrid with right-wing politics. Many are skinheads who carry fascist insignia. But the club, which counted General Franco among its supporters, has been reluctant to crack down on them.

Last month, Real's European semi-final against Borussia Dortmund at the Bernabeu in Madrid was delayed for more than an hour after Ultras reached through the stand netting and pulled down ropes supporting the goalpost. The club was fined by Uefa for

allowing the Ultras into the area behind the goal which has no seating — a prerequisite for all European games, to prevent violence.

Demand for tough action after that incident led Real's management to close a small clubhouse used by the Ultras in the stadium, which they had decked out with swastikas. More measures to control the Ultras are being called for.

Madrid's regional president, Ruiz Gallardon, said: "We cannot allow what should have been a great family celebration involving all the people of Madrid and indeed all Spaniards to turn into a nasty incident reported on the crime pages."

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US editor turns clock back in working mother debate

Joanna Coles in New York on a row over whether women in journalism can have it all

WOMEN'S hard-won equality in the workplace suffered a double blow in United States newsrooms yesterday after a woman editor at the New York Times sparked a national debate by announcing she did not believe that in "an all-consuming profession like journalism, a woman with children can devote as much time and energy as a man".

Meanwhile, Mark Willes, the publisher of the Los Angeles Times, declared that women readers preferred "emotional" stories to "analytical" ones and, in a bizarre proposal which drew immediate condemnation, suggested that the founder of Cosmopolitan was that she had "forfeited" the chance to have children.

The comments by Mr Willes and Joyce Purnick, metropolitan editor of the New York Times, fuelled anger among journalists — male and female alike.

"I was appalled," said Jill

Hamburg, the associate editor of Working Woman magazine, which caters to female executives. "It was so ironic. She makes [her comments] on the day Jill Barad, the chief executive of Mattel, appears on the cover of Business Week. She has two children."

Judson Culbreth, the editor in chief of Working Mother, which has 2.5 million readers in the US, said: "As someone who does have children and has a career, I wouldn't agree. But face-time (the American term for time spent in the office) isn't the only way to be noticed. It's about working smarter, not longer or harder. In business you're judged on results not effort."

Ms Purnick made her comments to an audience at New York's Barnard College, Columbia University, on Tuesday night. She claimed the key to her own relative success was that she had "forfeited" the chance to have children.

"If I had left the Times to have children and then come back to work a four-day week, the way some women on my staff do now, or if I had taken long vacations and leaves to be with my family, or left the

office at 6pm instead of 8 or 9pm, I wouldn't be the metro editor," she said.

Ms Purnick said, with rare exceptions, women who had children tended to "get off the track and lose ground". She said: "Should women and men who have taken the detour of the mommy/daddy track be as far along as those who haven't? Would that be fair? I reluctantly have to say that it would not be fair."

At a meeting called the following day, Ms Purnick explained her comments to several dozen employees. Asked if she thought mothers contributed less to the paper, she replied: "You contribute differently."

Ms Purnick said she had been "taken aback by the response" and had been "a little naive". "But I don't think you can have it all," she said, echoing the statement by the founder of Cosmopolitan, Helen Gurley Brown.

She said her speech was largely personal about "my regret at not having a family", and that she would not have taken her current job if she had children. "Unless you are very wealthy or make accommodations with your husband that he works at home, it's very difficult," she said.

Ms Purnick is married to a former Times executive now a columnist, Max Frankel. She also said parents often sought flexible schedules and that such decisions "have consequences" for a career. Mr Willes's comments were made in the Wall Street Journal. Citing a series about child junkies which he said appealed more to women readers than to men, he said women liked stories "with emotional punch" and that mothers were more likely to know the names of their children's teachers than fathers.

Bob Baker, the metro editor of the Los Angeles Times, said it was "as if a stink bomb had been thrown into the newsroom". Jim Newton, a reporter, said "a fairly large number of women in this place are pretty miffed".

Journalists were also concerned about his plan to pay them more for quoting women and minority groups "want to feel like the paper's theirs [but] they can't do that if it's a fundamentally white-male newspaper".

Mr Baker told the Washington Post that Mr Willes's plan was "a manipulative, market-driven sales approach to journalism". He added: "He can play moral leader or businessman, but those two things shouldn't mix."

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Gunmen run riot in Dagestan

James Meek in Moscow

THE COLLAPSE of the rule of law across a broad swath of southern Russia was exposed yesterday when a band of several hundred heavily-armed men were given the chance to walk free after killing two policemen and storming the local government headquarters.

The paralysis of the Moscow authorities in the face of what was effectively an attempted local coup in Dagestan, a strategic region on the

Caspian Sea, suggests it may be only a matter of time before it follows its neighbour Chechnya into chaos, war and *de facto* independence.

The gang of 200-300 fighters, loyal to Russian MP Nadir Khachilayev, head of the Union of Russian Muslims, seized the government building in the centre of the Dagestani capital, Makhachkala, and hoisted the green Islamic flag over it. They were persuaded to leave later.

The incident followed a clash on Wednesday night between police and Mr Khachilayev's

bodyguards in which at least two police were killed. The bodyguards barricaded themselves in the MP's house, but yesterday broke through a police cordon and, with their armed supporters, headed for central Makhachkala. Shots were exchanged and there were reports of injuries.

Dagestan has escaped the turmoil of Chechnya until now because of the delicate balance of fear among the region's 36 minorities, which all speak different languages. Yesterday's clash bore the hallmarks of a local clan dis-

agreement before next month's election of a new regional leader. More specifically, it looked like a flare-up in the rivalry between the Khachilayev brothers, Nadir and Magomed — who are reputed to control caviar-harvesting operations on the Caspian Sea, and the mayor of Makhachkala, Said Amirov.

The confrontation may be confined to Dagestan, but the more radical forces, including those who would like to see Dagestan and Chechnya unite in a single independent state,

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US shuttle diplomacy has failed to solve the border spat between Eritrea and its former comrade-in-arms, writes James McKinley

Old Ethiopian allies fall out over land

EIGHT years after they jointly won a civil war against a communist dictator, the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea seem on the verge of attacking each other over a triangle of rocky land along their shared border.

At the weekend they massed thousands of troops on each side of the disputed territory. Their officials have criticised each other using increasingly harsh rhetoric, each accusing the other of invading a 250-square-mile zone around Badame known as the Yigra triangle.

The crisis has worsened despite the efforts of the United States assistant secretary of state, Susan Rice, who has shuttled between Addis Ababa and Asmara for three days, according to Washington officials.

"Both of these countries are close friends of the United States," a state department spokesman, James Rubin, said. "We have urged both governments to practise restraint."

But the Ethiopian foreign minister, Seyoum Mesfin, said his country would take "necessary measures" unless Eritrea immediately withdrew its troops. Eritrea denies its forces are on Ethiopian soil.



Ethiopia's hardline message came a day after the pro-government newspaper Abiyowawi Democracy accused Eritrea of having deployed 20,000 troops along the frontier, digging trenches and building defences around Badame and a second town, Sheraro.

The report could not be confirmed, although journalists who visited the region on Sunday said thousands of Eritrean troops had taken up defensive positions.

The crisis erupted last week, when Ethiopia accused Eritrea of having invaded its territory. The countries have disagreed about their border

since Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993. But they have remained allies, partly for historical reasons. Eritrean rebels played a pivotal role in the alliance of rebel groups that ousted Ethiopia's Marxist dictator, Mengistu Haile Mariam, in May 1991 and set up the present government.

Yet the amicable dispute between old comrades-in-arms about which colonial-era map should determine the modern border took a violent turn on May 6, when forces from both sides clashed in the disputed zone.

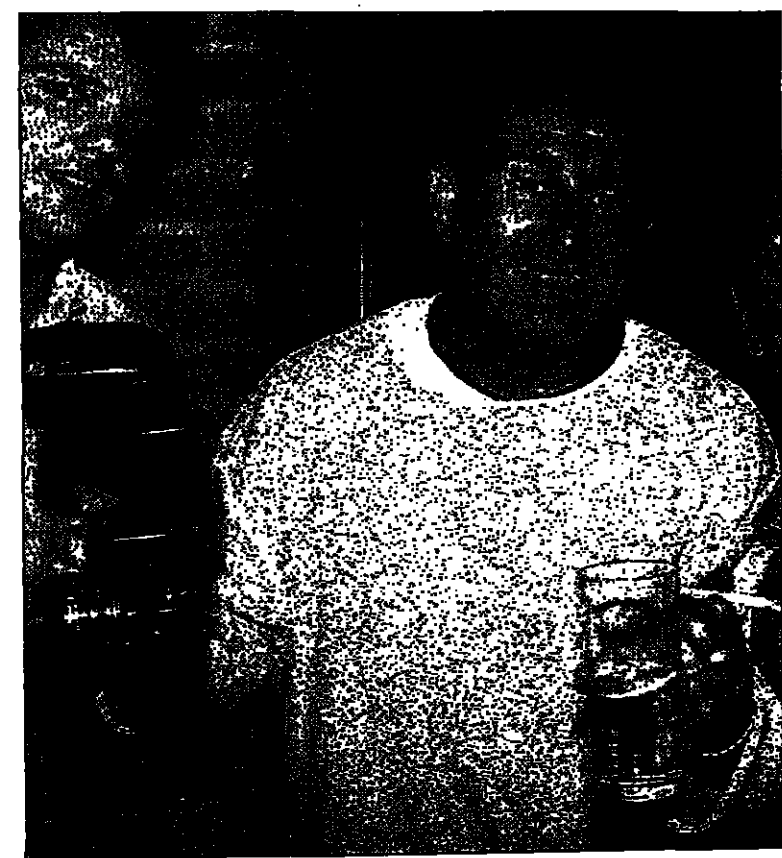
Details of what occurred are sketchy. Ethiopia says Eritrean troops crossed into its territory, ransacked health centres and schools and kidnapped civil servants. Ethiopian officials maintain that the troops are still on their territory. *New York Times*.

Reuters adds: Eritrea yesterday released copies of a map it said proved the validity of its claim to the disputed border area. Eritrea's cabinet said the map was issued by the Ethiopian Mapping Authority in 1997 and showed the Tigray administrative zone, an Ethiopian province bordering Eritrea, but that it had been altered to "carve out large swaths of Eritrean territory".

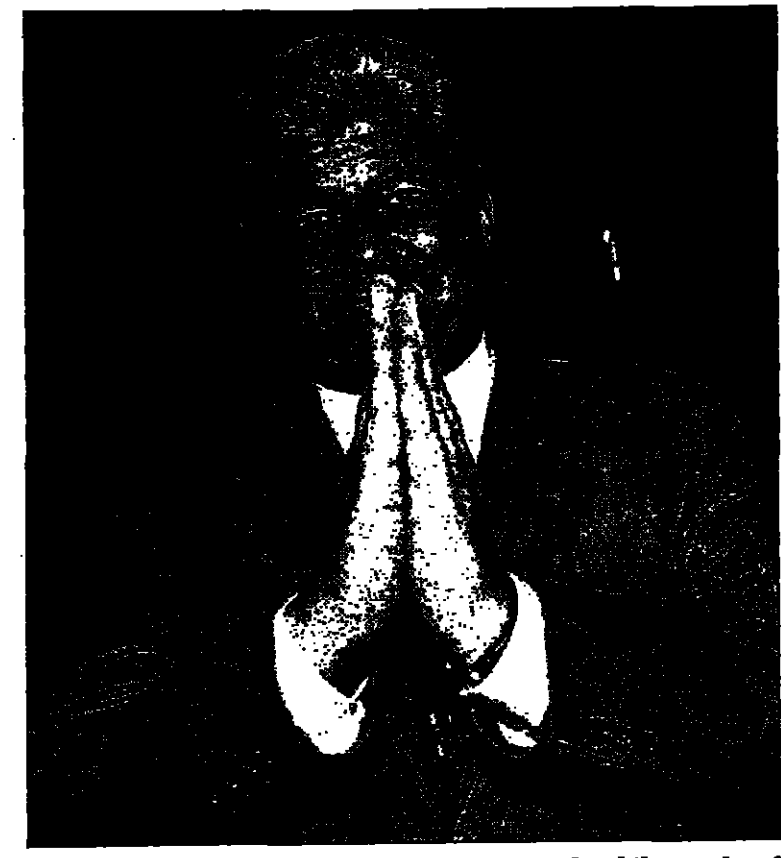


An Eritrean soldier looks towards the Ethiopian town of Sheraro at the weekend, when troops massed at the frontier

PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE BRADBURY



Photographer José Luis Cabezas a day before his burned and handcuffed body was found.



A rare picture of Alfredo Yabrán, who allegedly ordered the murder of Cabezas for photographing him

PHOTOGRAPH: HUGO VILLALOBOS

'Invisible man' takes bloody bow

Phil Gunson
on the murder mystery that may reach to the heart of government

By blowing his brains out with a shotgun as police arrived at his 7,000-acre estate in northern Argentina, fugitive multi-millionaire Alfredo Yabrán — prime suspect in the murder last year of a news photographer, José Luis Cabezas — has added a further dramatic twist to a mystery that reaches into the heart of government.

The alleged connections between Yabrán, whom former economy minister Domingo Cavallo called the boss of the mafia, and President Carlos Menem had seemed set to deal a mortal blow to the Argentine leader's shaky bid for re-election next year.

Yabrán styled himself "the invisible man". It was Cabezas, of the magazine Noticias, whose photographs tore away

the veil — and that allegedly provoked the tycoon to order his murder.

On January 25 1997, the newsman was kidnapped in the exclusive seaside resort of Pinamar, beaten, shot in the head and his body burned along with his car. No attempt was made to hide the remains, perhaps because the killers wanted to send a message; almost certainly because they felt immune from prosecution.

The investigation became a political hot potato, not least because of its implications for the struggle between Mr Menem and his bitter rival Eduardo Duhalde, governor of Buenos Aires province where the murder took place, for the Peronist presidential candidacy.

Unless the crime were solved, Mr Duhalde's bid for the candidacy was probably dead. But if he could link it to the president's inner circle, Mr Menem would be mortally wounded.

The dead businessman was the motor that activated the latent struggle between the two politicians, said commentator Eduardo van der Kooy, in the daily Clarín.

Judges linked to Mr Menem

tried to wrest jurisdiction from those of the province, while the president and members of his cabinet dismissed the alleged political implications of the crime as nonsense.

Their strategy suffered a blow when justice minister Elias Jassan — who had denied knowing Yabrán — was forced to resign after more

It seems clear that the last chapter in this gory tale has yet to be written

than 100 telephone conversations between the tycoon and the minister were traced to his cellphone.

Ten suspects have so far been arrested, including policemen and bodyguards working for Yabrán. But the breakthrough came when the ex-wife of the principal suspect claimed Yabrán told him to carry out the killing.

Police tracked Yabrán to his estancia in the northern

province of Entre Ríos, but as they approached the bathroom, Yabrán pulled the trigger on a shotgun.

They found him stretched out on the floor, wearing a white T-shirt and blue jogging pants. His face was unrecognisable, but an autopsy confirmed the identity of the corpse.

Nearly two years later, in which the 53-year-old businessman declared himself innocent of the Cabezas murder and said he had decided to take his life "because I do not want to lend myself to this parody".

As he was buried yesterday, there was suspicion that the government had contrived to remove Yabrán from the scene. It seemed barely credible that a man with an army of bodyguards could be caught alone and undefended in a place the police were bound to search.

Yabrán, like Mr Menem, was of Arab origin, although no direct connection between the two has been proven. From humble beginnings as an assistant in a bakery he built up a fortune he admitted was worth more than US\$400 million, but which others put at more than \$2 billion.

In the only television interview he ever granted, Yabrán described himself as a humble postman — a presumably secular reference to the postal companies he owned.

But when Mr Cavallo, then economy minister, decided in 1995 to denounce what he called the mafia encrusted in the power structure, he named Yabrán as running a parallel state.

Commenting on Yabrán's death, Mr Cavallo (now in opposition) said: "If President Menem had initiated an investigation as I did, the loss of many lives — including perhaps that of Yabrán — could have been avoided."

The president himself, who just days ago described as wretches journalists who insisted on the political implications of the Cabezas case, has avoided comment. He may, however, be somewhat relieved.

The death of the businessman, wrote Eduardo van der Kooy, "deprives Duhalde of an instrument of pressure that was hurting Menemism in this ruthless struggle for power". It seems certain, however, that the last chapter in this gory tale has yet to be written.

Uganda frees captives in one-way deal with Sudan

A plan to exchange the prisoners for a group of convent girls fell through, **Anna Borzello** writes in Kampala

THE 42 Sudanese prisoners sat in the shade of a tree at the edge of Entebbe airport. Despite having spent more than a year in military prison, they looked in reasonable health — with the exception of a man with staring eyes, who was said to have gone mad in captivity.

At midday half the group knelt to Mecca in the hot sun. Then they remained sitting until a Sudanese jet arrived from Khartoum. A Sudanese government delegate on a brief ceremony with a Ugandan security team and the prisoners were led across the tarmac to the waiting plane.

Their release came as a surprise. The soldiers are among 114 captured on April 9 last year during a joint offensive by Ugandan troops and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels.

The allies overran camps

belonging to the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has operated out of bases in government-held territory in southern Sudan since 1994.

The Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, said repeatedly that he would only release the captives if Sudan put pressure on the LRA to release 20 convent girls abducted from Abok in northern Uganda in October 1996.

The LRA, which is deployed by Sudan as a militia against the Ugandan-backed SPLA, is made up mainly of children abducted from villages and schools across northern Uganda. Unicef estimates that 10,000 have been taken in the past three years alone.

The original plan was for the LRA to release the girls in northern Uganda on May 14. The LRA was supposed to hand the girls over to a team from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Vatican-based Communio Dei S. Egidio.

But Ugandan government sources said the rebels failed even to bring the girls from southern Sudan. They claimed that the LRA entered Uganda with the intention of abducting ICRC officials to attract publicity.

In turn, the LRA denied the

charge and claimed that the Ugandan government intended to kill ICRC officials — and then blame the LRA.

A senior member of the Sudanese delegation acknowledged at the handover of the prisoners that the release of the girls had fallen through. But he said Sudan would continue to "exercise its influence" over the LRA to secure their freedom.

Despite the setback, Ugandan officials said they had released a third of the prisoners as a "goodwill" gesture.

The handover is one more strand in the complicated web of Sudan and Uganda's relations, which reached an all-time low in 1995 when the two broke off diplomatic ties, accusing each other of supporting rebel groups hostile to their governments.

Last year, however, Sudan requested Uganda to persuade the SPLA to join a peace initiative between the Khartoum government and six former Sudanese rebel groups. In return Uganda wants Sudan to scale down support for the LRA.

The Sudan government

News in brief

More landmines cleared than laid, US says

MORE landmines are being laid each year, the figure was much lower. He said: "In fact, we believe that more landmines are being removed now per year than are being laid."

He was speaking at the start of a state department conference to promote a US initiative

years ago that 2.5 million landmines were laid each year, the figure was much lower.

He said: "In fact, we believe that more landmines are being removed now per year than are being laid."

He was speaking at the start of a state department conference to promote a US initiative

to clear the world by 2010 of all anti-personnel landmines that threaten civilians.

"It might give the international community a boost to recognise that (global demining) is a more achievable task than perhaps some had thought it would be," he said. — *Reuters, Washington*.

Iran arrests dissident

IRANIAN authorities have arrested the son-in-law of dissident Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri on charges linked to unrest by backers of the senior cleric, newspapers said yesterday.

The daily Kayhan informed an unnamed source as saying Hadi Hashemi was being held for "provoking conflict and tension, particularly in Isfahan and Ahmabad".

Isfahan, and Ayatollah Montazeri's home town of Najafabad nearby, have been hotbeds of protest since the dissident cleric was put under house arrest after he questioned the authority of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian newspapers have reported arrests in Isfahan and Ahmabad after Ayatollah Khamenei last week criticised Ayatollah Montazeri's supporters for plans to demonstrate in protest against restrictions on him.

Thousands of hardliners marched on Friday to stop the dissidents' rally. Ayatollah Montazeri's supporters gave in. Mr Hashemi is the brother of Mehdi Hashemi, an Islamic radical executed in 1987 on charges of murder, kidnapping and using force to further factional aims. — *Reuters, Tehran*.

Israel strikes at Hizbullah

ISRAELI planes and helicopters attacked Hizbullah guerrillas near the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon yesterday, security sources said.

Two guerrillas were wounded when four Israeli warplanes fired four rockets on the mountainous Abi Rashed area, the sources said.

Two helicopters later fired four more rockets in Abi Rashed. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Israel also said it killed a guerrilla in south Lebanon overnight. The attacks brought to 43 the Israeli air raids on Lebanon this year. — *Reuters, Rashaya, Lebanon*.

education

Every Tuesday in the

The Guardian

Leader of Brazilian Indians shot dead after land fight

Alex Bellon
in Rio de Janeiro

ONE of Brazil's most important Indian leaders was shot dead on Wednesday as he was parking his car in a small town 150 miles from Recife.

Francisco de Assis Araujo, a co-ordinator of the Organisation of Indigenous Peoples, had for 12 years led the fight for the demarcation of Indian territories in the north-east of the country and two other states.

Araujo, also chief of the 8,000-strong Xucuru-Kariri tribe, said he had lived with

constant death threats from farmers occupying tribal land. According to his relatives, he received several telephone threats earlier this week.

Although 68,000 acres were given to his tribe in 1995, the area has been disputed by its former owners. A law passed in 1996 allowed the demarcations to be challenged in court and this raised tension between Indians and landholders.

Araujo, aged 47, was shot in the neck and back outside his sister's house in Pesqueira. The unidentified killer ran off.

150 ان الامم

Analysis Green accounting

The real cost of living in Britain

Even economists admit that the quality of life cannot be assessed by what the nation earns. Devising a measure for hidden factors like damage to the environment is not easy, but a start has been made.

Charlotte Denny and John Vidal report

CONSIDER the following. Since 1972, Gross Domestic Product — the annual output of the economy — has risen one-and-a-half times. During the same period, violent crime has quadrupled, the number of workless households has tripled and the incidence of asthma has tripled.

Steady economic growth, measured by rising GDP, is the holy grail for most policy makers. But some economists wonder why. Despite the growth in GDP per head in most European countries since the early 70s, there is no evidence that people on the whole are much more content than they used to be.

Part of the problem is that GDP takes no account of the drawbacks of economic activity — pollution, congestion, and the loss of the natural environment. It is simply a measure of the output of goods and services in the economy over the year. Rising output equals rising incomes, but not necessarily higher living standards.

As well as failing to measure quality of life, many environmentalists say that GDP doesn't address whether current economic activity is sustainable.

Much economic activity — particularly in the industrial sector — exploits the earth's natural resources for its raw materials or uses the environment as a dustbin for unwanted byproducts. Many of these resources are non-renewable and the environment's capacity to absorb pollution is limited.

Measuring growth while failing to take account of the bill we are writing for future generations is, according to the green lobby, like a company reporting an operating profit while neglecting to

mention that it is running down its assets. In the short term, it might buoy up the company's share price, but in the long term it will go out of business.

Economists have always admitted that GDP is a limited measure. "The welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income," wrote Simon Kuznets (1), who, along with John Maynard Keynes, developed the basic framework for measuring the economy after the last war.

Fifty years later, the international bodies which set the rules to ensure that nations calculate their GDP the same way — the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the OECD — have recognised that the lack of any framework for accounting for environmental damage is a major shortcoming. In 1993 they recommended that countries should develop a parallel set of accounts to describe the impact of the economy on the environment.

This week, the Office for National Statistics published its first attempt to do just that. But the approach taken in Environmental Accounts 1996 falls far short of what many green groups had hoped for.

In keeping with what the UN bodies recommended, the office has provided figures on how much pollution various types of economic activity cause, but the statisticians have not attempted to cost the damage.

Green lobbyists say that without a quantifiable measure of the environmental impact, the focus on growth cannot be challenged. But the statisticians say that measuring environmental damage is an uncertain and subjective business, and is not part of their role.

GDP focuses on what can be

measured — goods and services which have a price, because they are bought and sold. Non-market transactions — for example, unpaid domestic labour — are not included, and this leads to some odd outcomes. If you pay someone to decorate your home rather than do it yourself, GDP rises, even though the real output of the economy is essentially unchanged.

Damage to the environment and to human health from pollution doesn't come with a price tag on it, so deciding how much to subtract from national wealth is difficult.

Some costs can be measured. Atmospheric pollutants cause more cases of asthma. While burgeoning hospital and drug bills can be computed, the cost to the individual is harder to value. And when lives are lost as a result of pollution, the problems become even trickier. How do you value human life?

SOME economists advocate using shadow prices. For example, surveys can deduce what value people place on their lives by asking them how much they would pay to avoid putting their life in danger. But people take up smoking even though they are aware of the risks, which suggests many of us hold contradictory attitudes towards the value of our lives.

Fully costing environmental damage involves putting a price on even more intangibles. For example, how should we value the potential loss of an unspoiled landscape or an endangered species? Global warming is hard to price because it means making judgments about the value of damage in the future.

Despite these problems, some lobby groups have independently developed their

Below the line

What if the government's policy of subsidising related businesses on the income and sustained depletion of natural resources, is more money in the economy a suitable compensation?

Natural resources

Expected to feed the economy in 1993 approximately 100 million tonnes of oil and 66 million cubic metres of gas were extracted.

Land use

Effects on biodiversity and amenity. Economic activities displace natural ecosystems. Between 10-20 per cent of all UK's native species are threatened.

Emissions

Emissions, 000s tonnes, 1995

Black Smoke	1,000
Carbon Monoxide	5,328
Land	2,781
Carbon Dioxide	5,977
Methane	4,105
Nitrogen Dioxide	1,257
Sulphur Dioxide	3,284
Nitrous oxide	2,615
Aerosols	1,000

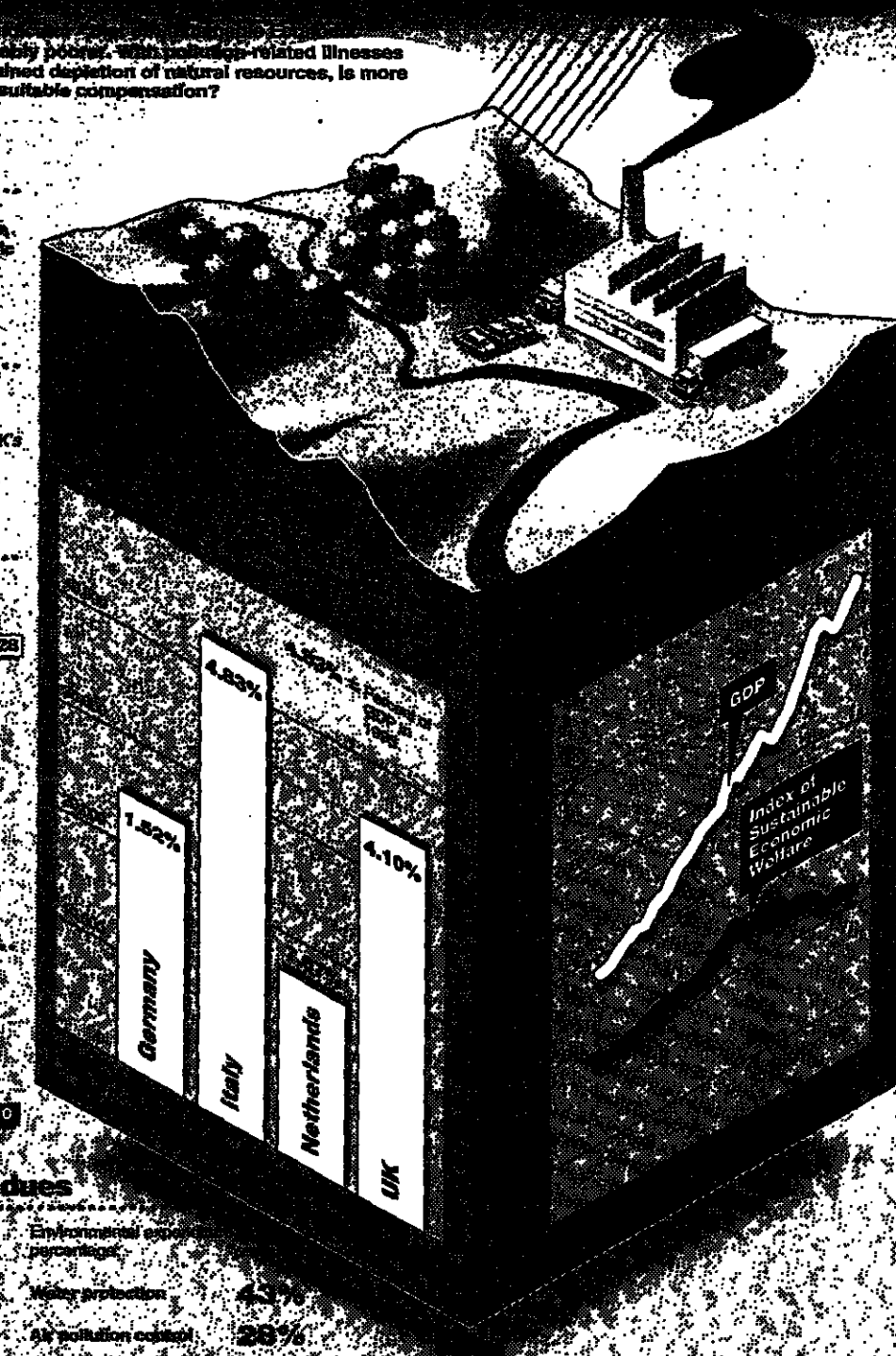
Human cost

Estimated deaths due to air pollution, 1995

Black smoke	1,000
Sulphur dioxide	1,000
Ozone	12,500
Total	24,100

Paying their dues

In 1996, local environmental expenditure was estimated to be £200 million. The Department of the Environment's spending on environmental protection was estimated at £1.2 billion. The Department of Transport's spending on environmental protection was estimated at £1.2 billion.



Branson bestows a smile on Ulster
8

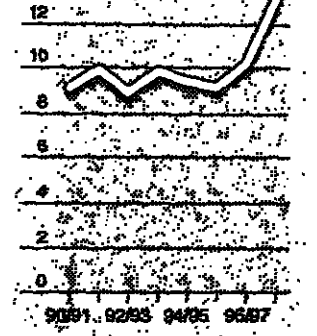


Somerset A case in point

A consultation carried out by Somerset County Council revealed local people's concerns about their environment.

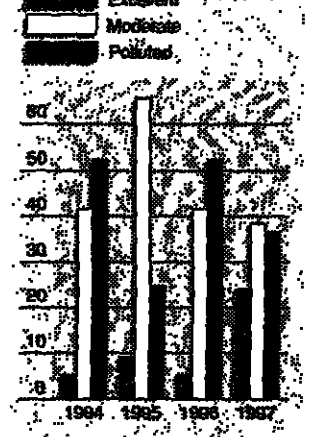
Recycled waste

% of household waste recycled



Coastal pollution

% of coastline polluted



own measures of green GDP — output adjusted for environmental damage and other losses to quality of life. In Britain, the best established of these is the New Economics Foundation's Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare.

As well as accounting for the damage to the natural environment, the index includes unpaid domestic labour, and changes to the distribution of income. It rises for most of the postwar period, peaking around 1978, and since then has declined steadily.

But the index has its critics. A simple change to its methodology — for example, valuing domestic labour by how much women could earn in the labour market rather than at the going rate for a cleaner, makes a big difference to the picture. Statisticians say the framework it uses to assess non-market activities is simply not robust enough.

One alternative to a single measure of Green GDP is a regular series of environmental indicators, like the ones the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions began to publish in 1996. The move has received

enthusiastic backing from the Minister for the Environment, Michael Meacher, who would like to see air quality measures heading the evening television news, just as the inflation figures do now.

Local communities are several steps ahead of government departments in developing environmental indicators. Local authorities, which make more than 70 per cent of all day-to-day decisions affecting a community's environment, have developed their own "sustainability" programmes and indicators to measure progress.

The pressure for new indicators started after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The British branch of United Nations environment department and the Local Government Management Board moved fast. Within a few years almost every council in Britain had its own Local Agenda 21 officer, and a pilot project for alternative indices was being tested. This is now being developed nationally.

It is a broad popular process rather than a governmental one, with communities being invited to choose the indicators they think are most relevant

for themselves. The process would shock the Office for National Statistics in its informality and breadth. In the London borough of Merton, more than 900 community organisations and residents responded to an invitation to become involved in a group, including businessmen, bankers, students, environmentalists, lawyers, and representatives from ethnic minorities, the council and the police, met regularly for six months to choose their indicators.

FROM a menu of more than a hundred, 31 of particular relevance to the borough have been chosen. These included the prevalence of asthma in children, the state of the borough's trees, decay in children's teeth, adult literacy, premature deaths, the quality of pondlife, air pollution and perceptions of safety at night.

Some councils have been more ambitious than others. Most have included air quality, waste, and health, but also a variety of other less obvious social indicators. Data were collected from many sources,

but mainly by people using their own initiative. The borough of Sutton chose allotment area, noise complaints, length of bicycle routes and the number of shops stocking fair trade products. Lancashire county council looked at fear of crime, school leavers' literacy, house prices, working hours and access to day-care for under-fives. Somerset measured road accidents, beaches and water quality. Others have included general happiness, the amount of organic food grown, areas of prosperity and deprivation, the variety of wildlife and how transport was used.

The results are not scientific, but they have been deeply revealing. Lancashire is fairly typical. Of 39 indicators used in the first study 10 were judged to show the county moving towards sustainability and improved quality of life, and 16 suggested a deterioration.

What will cheer Meacher, trying to set national alternative indicators which are illustrative enough to make the news whenever published, is that people themselves have

enthusiastically embraced them. A single indicator of green GDP may be a dream. But the popularity of local indicators suggests that communities have an appetite for more than just bald economic statistics to tell them how well off they are. While the ONS's green accounts may have disappointed environmentalists, the raw information contained in Environmental Accounts can help the cause of those who are trying to put environmental sustainability on the agenda.

Sources: (1) Report to the US Congress, 1954, by Simon Kuznets; (2) UK Environmental Accounts, 1998, HMSO; (3) More isn't Always Better, New Economics Foundation, 1997. Graphics sources: UK Environmental Accounts 1998; Friends of the Earth; The Quality of Life Briefing, New Economics Foundation; 20 Indicators of Sustainability, Somerset County Council.

Graphics: Paddy Allen; Finbar Sheehy. Research: Jane Crinion. Charlotte Denny is the Guardian's Economics reporter. John Vidal is our Environment editor.

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE DIARY is captivated by the Daily Telegraph's front page preview of Jonathan Aitken's forthcoming defence. Mr Aitken lied about that Paris Ritz bill, he'll avow in court, to protect his secret work as an MI6 intermediary with the Saudis. This article (backed up inside with a paean by Aitken's close friend Malcolm Pearson, a fervent right-winger) refers to "friends of Mr Aitken", but is vague about its own provenance — and the paper is rightly keen to protect its source. How irritating, then, that when a reporter faced the piece to Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger for his comments on Wednesday night, the text was interrupted by a note to sub-editors. It read as follows: "This comes directly from Aitken but cannot be shown to him." Mum. "This", the Telegraph insists, means not the whole article, but a couple of paragraphs reporting that Aitken refused to mention his relationship with the Saudis before because "he did not want to betray state secrets"; and that he feels he can now do so because fellow defendant Said Ayas "has made a statement setting out the intelligence link". Good to learn (albeit by chance) that Telegraph editor Charles Moore keeps in close touch with his old chum, and remains so loyal in this time of trial.

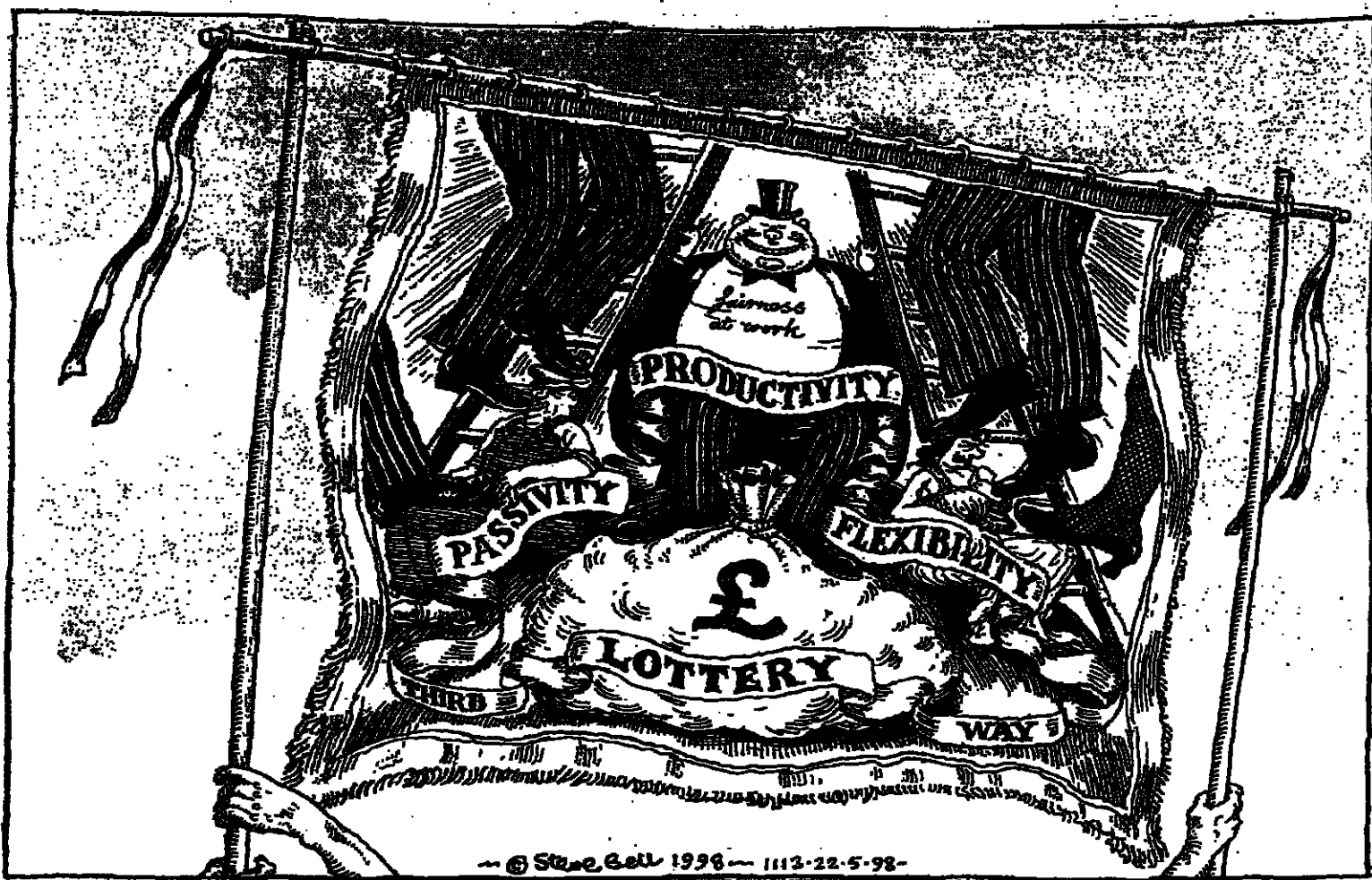
MEANWHILE, Jonathan's sister, Maria, rings in a searing rage over Tuesday's item suggesting he tried to sell a biography of Mrs Thatcher to a New York publisher. (The actress has complained to Lord Wakeham at the Press Complaints Commission). Sadly, the rules of sub judice mean I cannot detail the details of a fractious conversation which touched on the distinction between a lie and an error. Perhaps we will return to it in the fullness of time.

THE FA's acquittal of Alan Shearer on charges of kicking a Leicester player in the head becomes more curious all the time. The FA declared this blatantly deliberate kick "an accident", you may recall, after viewing "a previously unseen camera angle" supplied, according to the FA's Steve Donble, by Sky TV. How odd that yesterday Sky seemed unaware of this. The "low pitch-level shot" in question was not unseen at all, apparently, but was shown on Sky the day after the incident. Meanwhile, Sky provided the FA with no further material. So we call the FA back. "We have come to a decision based on another TV angle," insists Adrian Bevington, "and the matter is closed." Yes, but given Sky's confusion, shouldn't you now reopen it? "As far as the FA is concerned, this matter is closed." Is it? We shall see.

SANDWICH retailer Pret A Manger looks after its customers faultlessly. "Remove," insists the message on the celophane wrapping, "before eating cake."

OUR first champagne-winning nonagenarian is Annie Levy of Bournemouth. "There is my birth certificate," writes Mrs Levy, in response to the one-off promotion rebranding the Diary as the column for the more mature reader (under-35s are now barred, of course, without a signed note from parents or legal guardians). "I intend to keep reading the Guardian so long as Nancy Banks-Smith keeps writing for it!" Mrs Levy continues. Well said. A glance at the accompanying document reveals that she was born on June 15, 1904, and will thus turn 94 the day England meets Tunisia in Marseille. We hope she enjoys the champagne, and remind others that 11 bottles — magnums for telegram holders — are still to be claimed.

IN the Sun, the two nurses pardoned by Sudi King Fahd are berated for selling their story. This outrage may be connected with the rival Mirror's having signed them up, and it may not. Either way, how droll to put a thunderous leader headline "cashing in on a murder" directly above a puff for the new book by repentant IRA bomber, Sean O'Callaghan.



Irish peace vote

Get a kitchen but lose your soul

Decca Aitkenhead



IF RICHARD Branson is to be thanked for getting Northern Ireland to vote Yes today, then in the spirit of peace and reconciliation I suppose we will have to forgive him all the appalling acts of absurdity and conceit he has committed in the past. It was very good of him to drop by this week and, though he did seem a little surprised to see him, we can only hope that they were also pleased, and will vote accordingly.

On reflection, he was not such a surprising visitor. With the Yes campaign looking shaky by midweek, no man could better convey Blair's hopes for the province than Branson. The question Blair's government has repeatedly asked itself is: how can Ulster be persuaded to forget about politics and the past, and get on with normal life? One popular answer, echoed by Bill Clinton and others, is to throw money at it.

If it votes Yes today, international investors will come charging in like so many white knights. The muddled high streets will be replaced by shiny malls, there will be Boots the Chemist for everyone, and the peace dividend will provide the good people of Ulster with as many sun-dried tomatoes as their hearts desire. Branson's presence was a smiling vision of the life that could be theirs for a cross in the right box today.

The process is already under way. After the ceasefire, Derry council was chaired by a Marxist, & Spencer, and boasted that the city centre was now starting to look "just like anywhere else". In the border area known as bandit country, tricolours and shop signs are still hammered to telegraph poles, but they've seen better days. The flags are ragged, the IRA signs are missing the odd letter. No-

body has bothered to replace them. If all goes to plan, people will soon be too busy earning and spending money to go around painting murals. Advertising will cover the walls instead. Eventually, it is hoped, the Northern Irish will prefer to be defined by what they can consume, rather than by what they believe. They will worry about labels. They will be normal.

Politicians are absolutely right to identify the relationship between the weakness of consumer culture and the power of political culture. The two are products of each other; just as material deprivation feeds political consciousness, so too does political commitment make materialism look like a pretty trivial priority. The mistake, however, is to assume the exchange of political for consumer identity is one which will make Ulster an unreservedly better, richer, happier place.

Several things are apparent when people in Northern Ireland talk about their lives. There is the bitterness, the resentment, the sheer weariness. But there is also the sense that they feel they belong to something bigger than themselves, and that their lives matter beyond the minutiae of daily existence. Pub talk in Belfast is peppered with dates and history which would sound bizarre in Bath, but here they express the intimate fabric of identity. This tends to be regarded as the problem — why don't they have proper, decent preoccupations, like how to pay for a new kitchen? What gets overlooked is that it's exactly this fabric which has been enriching and sustaining. For all the misery of the Troubles, Ulster has an enviable sense of purpose, which leaves the rest of us looking fairly limp.

Of course, it's easy to be romantic about the Troubles.

particularly when you haven't had to live through them. When a militant republican says, "The material side of things? If all you've got's a nice house and car and nothing else, you might as well drink yourself to death. You need a richer life than that", such sentiment sounds so noble and magnificent because he can find yourself forgetting the ugly reality of car bombs. But you don't have to romanticise sectarianism to recognise that things hold different values for many in Northern Ireland, or that this is one reason why some will find

If all goes to plan, advertising will soon blot out the sectarian murals

it hard to vote Yes today. The No voters have been accused of a dark, shameful attachment to sectarian conflict. In some cases this is true, but in many cases wrong. What many people are struggling with is the fear that their individual lives have always counted for something, and might cease to after today. When Ian Paisley takes his half-dressed talk of conspiracy and menace around housing estates, people aren't persuaded by him because they are stupid. They are persuaded because he makes them feel that they matter, and can't be bought off by Richard Branson and shopping malls. "It will all have been for nothing," they fret.

Miserically, it seems the majority will manage to overcome these fears today, vote Yes, and give Northern Ireland a chance to move forward. But if it is to proceed as

a place where people still feel they matter, their history of intense political engagement will have to be considered not the problem, but part of the solution. You only have to go to Croydon to see that out-of-town supermarkets do not equate to stimulating lives, and it is highly doubtful that people in Ulster, of all places, will mistake the one for the other. This is not simply a pragmatic proposal to give them a stake to stop them getting restless. It's a hope that a politically awake country won't be numbed to sleep with bland consumerism.

All over Northern Ireland, there are groups involved in politics. Dove House is a community centre for the Catholic Bogside area of Derry. It sits among bomb-scarred squalor, dispensing help and advice on housing, education, drugs — the usual stuff of community work in places where resources are tight and problems generous. Dove House has long been suspected of sinister motives — a Frove centre sheltering behind the word community because ex-prisoners work there. Doncha MacNiallais is one. He is voting Yes today, and talks about a future where community groups will act together, translating old sectarian energy into radical political action.

"People used to refer to us here and say we were politically motivated. I would say, what's your motivation then? Is it your age? Everybody in life is either politically motivated, or they're not motivated at all. In which case, they don't live. They just exist."

Richard Branson would probably be puzzled by this opinion of wages. I hope Northern Ireland doesn't change so much that Belfast one day says it wants him to be mayor.

Ho-ho magic for thinkies

Bel Littlejohn

COMEDY Rules, KO? Love-it-love-it-love-it! Thankfully I've been blessed with a well-developed (some might say over-developed) sense of humour ever since attending Professor Malcolm Bradbury's postgraduate degree course in the subject 20 years ago. And that's made me one of my good friends John Birt's most respected commissioning editors at good old Auntie Beeb, bless her cotton socks.

Actually, it's beautifully idiomatic and richly humorous expressions like these — "Auntie Beeb", "bless her cotton socks" (!) — that I've always found sure ways to hit the old funny bone. And over the past 10 years, I've been employed to use my in-built sense of what makes for really good comedy to "lighten up" some of the corporation's more heavy-going "thinky-thinky" programmes.

Phil Jupitus, David Baddiel, Jo Brand, Lee Hirst, Rory McGrath... these are just some of the truly hilarious performers who can always be relied on to inject that necessary slice of rich, rich comedy — not to mention humorous observation! — into even the most heavyweight discussion programme.

I've recently been having them on to "lighten up" that old BBC stalwart, Newsnight. Not long ago, it was in grave danger of getting bogged down in endless reports and interpretation of — yawnsville! — current affairs. Now if, say, Sierra Leone is coming up, we dip into the old kit and try to get the hilarious Jo Brand on to give us her unique "sideways" observations on the whole situation.

"Sierra Leone? What's that?" she asked last Friday, before giving us this immortal reply: "A bloke with a Ford Sierra who fancies himself a bit of the old 'leone' in bed? Oooh! Count me out! I'd rather have a period!"

Result? A much more lively, in-your-face kind of show — attracting a lot more young people with no interest whatsoever in news and current affairs.

AND, along with one helluva lot of young people, I'm such a fan of the great Phil Jupitus that last week I arranged that the producers of Question Time — always in danger of getting a bit worthy, less it — should put their proposed special guest, Helmut Kohl, on hold and give this amazingly versatile

comedy performer a go. I don't have to tell you that he was a sure-fire hit — at one stage even managing to down a pint of beer in a single gulp whilst answering questions from the studio audience on a future for peace in Northern Ireland. And I've been working a little bit of my old ho-ho magic on radio as well. I've always loved radio, because it leaves your mind free to do something else. And on the new-look Radio 4, we aren't afraid to tackle complex, specialist subjects, just so long as they're hosted by a top-rated comedy performer, preferably in the form of a light-hearted and totally off-the-wall quiz.

So upcoming in the new season we've got The Philosophy Football Roadshow, in which David Baddiel sets one old philosopher against another, just like football teams — with predictably hilarious results! We've also got Lee Hirst introducing a new series of The Brains Trust, only this time as The No-Brains Trust — and we're out to find the dumbest person in the whole of the British Isles!

BRIILLIANT! And it works the other way round, too. These days, high-ranking politicians, thinkers, authors, blah, blah, know that if they're really going to make it big outside their own particular little fields then they must show they've got a truly wicked sense of humour. And, more importantly, they've got to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the average viewer that — yup! — they can laugh at themselves.

We in New Labour have learnt one helluva lot from the likes of David Mellor, Neil Hamilton and Cecil Parkinson. When their public images were in free-fall, they all went on the totally must-

We're not afraid of big issues as long as they're tackled by a comedian

see Have I Got News For You, laughed valiantly at all the humorous abuse thrown at them — and after the show found themselves catapulted right back into the good books of Mr and Mrs Joe Public! As a result of which, I mean, a lovely Alastair Campbell has successfully negotiated with the producer of EIGHTYFOUR to include Derry Irvine and Robin (with the lovely Gaynor) as studio guests in the present series.

And let's not forget the dear old Guardian, which I've successfully managed to drag kicking and screaming into the funny part of the 20th century.

"Hey you guys — lighten up!" I said to the Scott Trust a few years ago — and now there's a firm rule on the paper that not a law is passed or a war fought without at least 10 first-rate post-modern quips from our regular columnist! Love it!

Irish peace vote

We, the IRA, have failed

Anthony McIntyre

IN THE H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison camp, when victory for the IRA seemed a foregone conclusion, "doing time", despite the harshness of prison life, was relatively easy. Conviction sustained most of us. Our view of the world was simple, perhaps simplistic. Britain had no right to be in our country. It seemed as if to us for British soldiers to die — as John Cleese once said — to keep China British as it was to keep Ireland so.

Part of the time spent in prison was under the leadership of the late Bobby Sands. He led us in an era when the British state had yet to get the measure of the IRA. And like many others who joined him in prison protest, he was arrested at a difficult time for republicanism. The republican movement was in a state of

strategic turbulence, desperately trying to anchor itself in the wake of a truce described as "disastrous" and "virtual surrender" by leaders such as Danny Morrison and Martin McGuinness. The strategic alternative was to wage a long war. As an IRA volunteer aged 18, in prison for the second time, I was unaware of much of this. It seemed there was a war to be fought and enemies to be killed.

I and others succeeded on both counts. On a cold January morning in 1977 in Belfast's Crown Court, with my mother gazing on in stunned disbelief, Lord Chief Justice Lowry informed me that I would serve at least 25 years for ending the life of a member of the Ulster Volunteer Force. I laughed at him, prompting tabloid headlines of "laughing killer jailed for life".

Sectarian attacks by young Protestant kids int-

ally prodded me towards the IRA. They had their Orange parades. We had our IRA — although quite where it was no one seemed to know. But it was comforting to "feel" it was there and would "settle up" on our behalf at some time. And now I was part of it.

Membership gave me the The war could have ended 20-plus years ago, and less ignominiously

arrogance of the damned — I did not care what the Lord Chief Justice said. I was immune from his concerns. As readily as I had "settled up" I prepared to settle down for the long haul.

And a long haul it proved to be — 17 years of it. But the

British had cause to fear republicans and went to great lengths to defeat us. They could not hope to buy us off. So they put our leader in a coffin after 66 days on hunger strike and sent him to his grave at the age of 27. And it was upon this that I was forced to reflect when I witnessed the present republican jail leader being allowed to attend the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis.

Padraig Wilson, like Bobby Sands, was and is a selfless volunteer. His integrity is beyond dispute. But I did not share the euphoria of delegates at his presence. He was not there as a result of an amnesty reluctantly conceded, but was allowed to attend because the British wanted to bolster their strategy in Ireland by securing a Yes vote for the Stormont Agreement at the Ard Fheis.

In that sense the conference was less a case of chick-

ens coming home to roost than of turkeys celebrating Christmas. In trade union terms the republican leadership told those it represents that it had secured them a six-day week and lower wages. That the body of the hall did not storm the podium in anger at the Ard

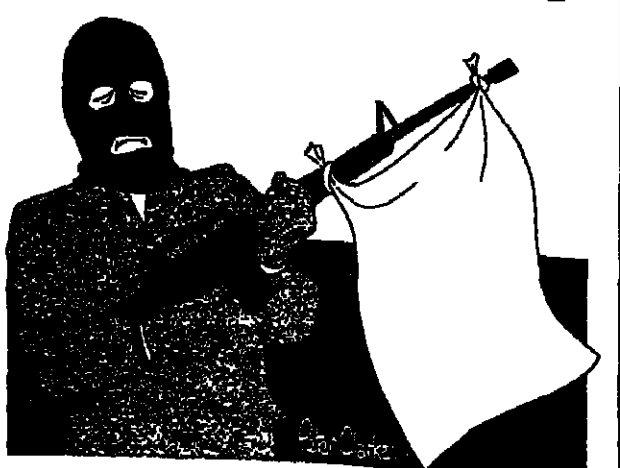
Comhairle is an indication of just how defeated the original Provisional republican project is.

Danny Morrison's recent piece in the Guardian was an exercise in putting a smile on the face of the corpse. To claim, as he does, that the IRA did not win

but had not lost either is demonstrably wrong. The political objective of the Provisional IRA was to secure a British declaration of intent to withdraw. It failed.

The objective of the British state was to force the Provisional IRA to accept — and to respond with — a new strategic logic to — the position that it would not leave Ireland until a majority in the North consented to such a move. It succeeded.

I concur with Danny Morrison's hope that the war is over. But it would have been over 20-plus years ago, and in less ignominious fashion, had the post-truce leadership not insisted on fighting to an inauspicious conclusion. And then we would have been spared the twin sorrows of one jail Officer Commanding dying to resist British state strategy and a second, through no fault of his own, appearing to legitimise it.



صكدا من الامل

The Guardian

Friday May 22 1998
Edition Number 47181
119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER
Tel No: 0171-278 2332
Fax No: 0171-837 4530
E-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Website: http://www.guardian.co.uk

Yes to the future

It's Ulster's only chance

TODAY SHOULD be a second good Friday for Northern Ireland. Six weeks have passed since that extraordinary Easter day, when men who had spent their whole lives fighting each other announced they had at last found a way to live together. Today the people of Northern Ireland have a chance to do the same. They will vote either to endorse that Good Friday agreement — or to strike it down.

The opinion polls suggest the Republic of Ireland has already made up its mind, and that it will vote in huge numbers to drop its constitutional claim to the North. The nationalist community in the province appears to be equally settled, with a colossal 96 per cent set to vote Yes. But there is no such consensus among Ulster's Unionists. On the contrary, the story of this dramatic, rollercoaster campaign has been the deep, emotional rift within Unionism: the last opinion poll before today's vote showed Northern Ireland's pro-Union community split right down the middle. There are fears that a majority of them might vote No. Technically that might not matter, so long as the overall result is Yes. But as a matter of political reality, the agreement needs the approval of both communities if it is to work. With 17 per cent of Unionists still apparently undecided, it's not too late to try to win them over.

The case for No has been, naturally enough, wholly negative. Rather than proposing an alternative solution to Ulster's woes, the naysayers — led by Ian Paisley, Bob McCartney and assorted rebels from David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party — have scratched away at the sore points within the Good Friday agreement. That's easy to do because, in the nature of compromise, the document is full of sacrifices

Unionists would prefer not to make — just as it's full of painful choices for nationalists, too. The Paisleyites seem unable to grasp that, as if the very concept of compromise were alien to them: their creed demands Utopia now, nothing less and no later.

Tellingly, they have concentrated little fire on the structural changes proposed in the agreement, suggesting they find it hard to fault what is a neatly-balanced piece of political machinery. Instead they have dwelled on the highly emotive, but essentially side issues to the document: the release of terrorist prisoners and the decommissioning of weapons. In short, they have played on the fears of their community. Both of these issues are worth tackling head on.

No one takes pleasure from the sight of convicted killers walking free, and there's no doubt that the jubilant reception granted to the Balcombe Street gang at Sinn Féin's Ard Fheis earlier this month appalled many Unionist voters. But no campaigners forget that prisoner releases have been a key part of peace processes all over the world, and that close to 500 life-sentence convicts have been set free in Northern Ireland already with barely an objection raised. Early prison release is a fact of life and it will continue, whether Northern Ireland votes Yes or No.

Decommissioning is a subject of equal confusion. The No campaign dislikes the agreement for failing to guarantee that the paramilitaries will hand over their weapons — as if a massive No vote would suddenly persuade the IRA, the UVF and the rest to lay down their guns. No piece of paper, no matter how copper-fastened, could ever guarantee such an outcome. Instead, an end to the conflict, and the gradual democratising of difference, represents the only real hope that arms will become redundant. As the Irish writer Tim Pat Coogan has said: "The best decommissioning agent is rust."

So neither of these difficult steps should deter Unionists from grasping the rich opportunities now before them. The agree-

ment enshrines the principle of consent — ensuring the preservation of the Union with Britain so long as the Northern Irish people want it. There is to be a new Assembly for the province, ending the decades of passivity which have seen Ulster ruled by London and not by the Northern Irish people themselves. If that means co-operating with Sinn Féin, then that's no more than Paisleyite Unionists do in local councils across Ulster already.

Those voting No may see too many risks in the deal: they would prefer to stick with the status quo. But it needs to be made clear that the status quo is not an option. A mass No vote would not see Tony Blair striving even harder to satisfy Unionist demands, as one No campaigner suggested yesterday. On the contrary, he along with Bill Clinton and the rest of the world community would be far more likely to walk away from the problem. Foreign investment would dry up, while one can only guess at the reaction of hardline republicans and loyalists at having their efforts at peaceful reconciliation so comprehensively snubbed. A No vote would not be a vote for the status quo but a lurch into a murky and ugly future.

Northern Ireland now has a chance to put the years of hatred behind it. It can start, as Mr Blair said in Coleraine, to settle its differences through debate, not bullets and bombs. Once the province is stable, it's bound to blossom with jobs and chances. Children from both sides will grow up aware that they share their land with another tradition, and that there's room enough for both of them. Maybe the guns will start to rust. All of that may seem a long way off. But it can start today, with one word: Yes.

Aitken's friends

Waiting the truth in court

NEARLY a year after the collapse of his libel action against the Guardian and Granada Television, Jonathan Aitken

has been charged with perjury, conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perverting the course of justice. Mr Aitken's friend, Said Ayas, 56, has also been charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perverting the course of justice. Those charges — announced last night — mean that it is now not possible to report further on the matters which will now be tested in court.

Had we been able to write freely about these subjects we would have turned the spotlight on the extensive coverage which the Daily Telegraph generously gave to Mr Aitken as the clock ticked away to the 69th minute of the 11th hour. Yesterday's paper led on a curious story in which "Friends of Mr Aitken" disclosed the defence which he intended to run if charged: it was encapsulated in the Telegraph's front page headline, "I lied for my country." As if this was not enough, the whole of an inside page was taken up with a "draft witness statement" purportedly written by Mr Ayas setting out in great detail Mr Aitken's defence that he was involved in intelligence work for Britain. Lest any reader should still not have grasped the point, an old school friend of Mr Aitken, Lord Pearson of Rannoch, was given a large amount of space on the comment pages of the Telegraph to repeat the defence yet again — while incidentally praising Mr Aitken and pouring scorn on the Guardian and Granada TV.

The status of the crucial material said to have been written by Mr Ayas is uncertain. It is uncertain whether Mr Ayas wrote it alone, whether Mr Aitken wrote it alone, whether they wrote it together and whether Mr Ayas was aware that it would find its way into the Telegraph, but let that pass. Those are doubtless matters which will be aired in court. A broader issue is the way in which two publications owned by a friend of Mr Aitken's, Conrad Black, have systematically been used to soften

up public opinion in favour of Mr Aitken and against the Guardian. In the Spectator, Paul Johnson and Taki (yet more friends of Mr Aitken), have repeatedly been given editorial and proprietorial licence to stick up for Jonathan and to peddle any fantasy they wished about this newspaper and its journalists. A particularly rich irony is that Mr Johnson recently used his column to attack "newspapers blatantly ignoring the sub judice rules" by continuing to write about Mr Aitken when charges were imminent. How wisely said.

The Telegraph is a more serious publication and any breach of trust with its readers is accordingly more serious. In full knowledge that charges against Mr Aitken were imminent yesterday, it printed the best part of 5,000 words in its defence and with its active co-operation. The timing could not have been more cynical. By publishing the material on the day of the charges the "friends" of Mr Aitken knew that no independent examination of the extraordinary claims contained therein would be possible.

In view of this constraint it is perhaps best to quote Mr Aitken himself. In a letter to the Times columnist, Matthew Parris, last October, Mr Aitken sought to correct the draft of material about him in a book Mr Parris was writing: "An area of your text where I think you go astray. On Page 367 you state: 'It is widely believed he [Aitken] became involved in intelligence work for the British government'. I do not know whether it was widely believed, but it was certainly untrue. This dotty suggestion was first made in the Spycatcher trial... Sir Robert Armstrong gave me written confirmation of the fact that I had never been involved in work for MI6."

Dotty indeed. Perhaps this written confirmation could be shared with readers of the Telegraph and the Spectator at the appropriate time? It might do something to make amends for so persistently deceiving them.

Letters to the Editor

Productivity and lesbian hens

YOUR report on Britain's lagging productivity (Bottom line is that Britain still can't make it, May 15) comes to much the same conclusion as the Anglo-American productivity studies of 1997. Doubtless the problem is still inexpert and untrained management. If we do improve productivity, let's hope that the rewards will be more fairly distributed than in the US. Between 1974 and 1994 US productivity rose by 24 per cent, real wages declined by 12 per cent, but corporate profits rose by 49 per cent, and executive salaries by a similar amount. John Garrett, Norwich.

I WAS amused to read about the homosexual swans (When two swans do not make a cygnet, May 20). My mother had two Silky Bantam hens which were pretty certain to be lesbians, utterly devoted to each other and oblivious to the attentions of the cockerel. Roger Ransley, Reizda Naylor, London.

CHARLES Elstone (Letters, May 18) wonders why his OK to like antique furniture paragon comments about it. Equally, why is science nerdy while amphibians are cool? Why does extensive knowledge of most things make you an "anorak", but not if it's music, football, or clubs. Who decides these things? J Reed, London.

WAITING for a train at Didcot recently, I was joined by a young man who made disparaging comments about group photographing locomotives. "You wouldn't catch me looking at trains all day," he mocked. After a pause, he added: "I shall be glad to get home, then I'm getting pissed." Clearly, not a nerd. Keith Farr, Chelsey, Oxon.

THE only answer to Microsoft's monopolistic proclivities is legislation. The proof? An announcement of the Microsoft Corporation is Horror of Competition Act. Michael Tully, London.

Polls apart over Ulster

JONATHAN Freedland (People in Northern Ireland will have no one to blame but themselves, May 20) reported on the vote against the Good Friday agreement in Ballyclare High School. But the vote was taken in the aftermath of the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis and there was an enormous emotional reaction against the release of prisoners to attend such meetings. As general secretary of Alliance, I have taken countless phone calls from people who are anxious, but fundamentally want to be reassured that they can take the step forward of voting Yes. On Antrim Borough Council, seven out of nine Unionists have recognised the agreement represents the way forward.

It is not easy to instil confidence in those who are weary after 28 years, but I believe that a majority of Unionists will vote Yes. Cllr David Ford, Alliance representative for South Antrim, Belfast.

THE population of the islands of Britain and Ireland have ethnic, political and economic histories so intensely bound together that each can claim a legitimate interest in the proposed settlement. But about half of just one of the smallest of these populations — the Protestants of Northern Ireland — are enjoying the right of veto over the settlement supported by all the other people in the two islands.

Surely the reasonable right of consent enjoyed by Northern Ireland's Protestant population to any move to a united Ireland needs to be counter-balanced by the right of consent of the population of both islands to the terms of Northern Ireland's constitutional arrangements within these two islands? There needs to be an alternative to acceptance of the status quo if there is a No vote. Charles Edwards, Milton Keynes.

THE peace process has been flawed in its failure to address the root cause of the conflict, the continuing refusal of Irish nationalism to concede the distinct, separate identity of Unionism.

In return for symbolic acceptance of the rights of the majority, the agreement prevents the integration of Northern Ireland with the rest of the UK even if a majority as well as local autonomy only on a power-sharing basis, and recognises the identity of the minority by institutional links with the Republic. It offers no such guarantees to Unionists, should they become the minority in the future. The Unionist Yes campaign is still right. The proposed institutions offer hope that a confident Unionism could compel nationalism to accept the reality of their separate identity. But nationalist leaders could ease Unionist fears. Adam Ryle, Driffield, East Yorks.

IT is deeply depressing to see the No campaign organised by Dr Paisley and other Unionists making headway. If they succeed may I suggest that the other countries in the UK this side of the Irish Sea should also have a referendum to see whether the province should be asked either to secede from the UK if they no longer wish to be a part of the "greatest treachery" (Dr Paisley's words) or, alternatively, be given Co Armagh as an independent province, so allowing the other five counties to develop the agreement made on Good Friday? John Ringham, London.

DE Owens was right to complain on behalf of mainland Britain: "Where's my referendum?" (Letters, May 20). As an Irish citizen long resident in Britain I am denied a Yes vote for the referendum in the Republic.

To be denied a voice in the proposed change in the Irish constitution is unfair to the many thousands of Irish citizens living in Britain, especially since they have been more seriously affected by the Troubles, Bombs in London and elsewhere, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and an undercurrent of anti-Irish feeling have all made the ratification of the agreement, north and south, a matter of great concern for the Irish community in Britain. Bryan Rooney, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.

Amnesty defends its rights

DR Tajudeen Abdul-Rahman (Letters, May 18) does scant justice to the campaigning and lobbying work done by Amnesty International and other human rights organisations. This work confronts and challenges the unacceptable practices of political murder, "disappearances" and torture. Amnesty has also worked for new international laws and standards, most recently promoting the International Criminal Court to ensure that human rights crimes can no longer be committed with impunity.

Since its foundation in 1961, Amnesty has adapted to changing patterns of human rights violation, moving towards a new focus on preventing massive abuses arising in the context of armed conflict, and their associated refugee movements. Typically, the victims of these violations are not the political elites, but the mass of the poor and underprivileged. Amnesty no longer focuses solely on individual dissidents. Neither is it accurate to portray Amnesty as ignoring economic and social rights

issues. Our current major campaign is promoting the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is 50 years old this year.

Your correspondent's contention that human rights work is "increasingly seen in Africa as irrelevant" or "worse" is an insult to those many courageous African human rights defenders who risk their lives and liberty to stand up against repression, even in the midst of genocide and war. Amnesty International is proud to support them. David Bull, Director, Amnesty International UK, London.



Katiza's story: the baroness and me

I AM the so-called "missing link" between Mrs Winnie Mandela's trial for the assault of Stompe Molotsi. I have temporary residence in this country until November this year when I must apply for renewal. Recently there has been publicity about my dispute with Baroness Susan Nicholson who, with the journalist Fred Bridgland, found me in a Zambian jail, where I was imprisoned to stop me giving evidence in Mrs Mandela's trial.

Last year a book, Katiza's Journey, was published about my life in the Mandela United Football Club, Mrs Mandela's Soweto bodyguard. It was written by Mr Bridgland but Mrs Nicholson held the copyright. She obtained this on my behalf when, after release from imprisonment, I was stranded for nearly three years in Sierra Leone before being admitted to Britain. She obtained power of attorney to act on my behalf. Before Archbishop Desmond Tutu, at last November's Truth and Reconciliation hearing into Winnie Mandela's human rights abuses, the baroness swore on oath that she would return the copyright to me as soon as she returned to Britain. She told the Archbishop: "I believe

strongly that journalists and authors should not take the story out of a refugee's head, that copyright should remain with the refugees. At the time this book was created Mr Cebechulu had no status anywhere, it was impossible to assign the copyright to him. I was the copyright of my own story. Originally she said she wanted to be reimbursed from royalties for expenses she has incurred on my behalf. But her latest excuse is that there were errors in the first edition which she wanted to ensure were corrected. These were corrected months ago, but still she refuses to return to me the rights of my own life story. I have been forced to take legal action against her to end the power of attorney, but I just cannot afford to sue her for the return of the copyright. I consider this to be an abuse of my human rights, which she says she is pledged to protect. Once again I find myself powerless against a powerful and influential person. Katiza Cebechulu, London.

Whip hand

YOU call (Leader, May 19) for Labour's leaders to counter fears of defection among Labour MPs by way of a "confident gesture towards the Awkward Squad".

Last week, Labour whips handed out ballot sheets for the new parliamentary section of the NEC, with the names of approved candidates — Pauline Green, Clive Soley and Anne Beeg — pre-printed. Labour MPs are being instructed to tell their parties whom to vote for. It appears the Government is prepared to devolve administration in the country, while retaining power by choosing the candidates to represent it on the other. Mark Seddon, Editor, Tribune, London.

those who have a record of dissent, or a mind of their own. For the European elections, a list system has been adopted, and Labour's NEC will rank candidates. No prizes for guessing who will come top, I, along with five other leftwing, pro-democracy, candidates, hope to stand for the constituency section of Labour's NEC. But I have discovered that some Labour MPs are being instructed to tell their parties whom to vote for. It appears the Government is prepared to devolve administration in the country, while retaining power by choosing the candidates to represent it on the other. Mark Seddon, Editor, Tribune, London.

Truth will out: what MI6 was up to on Knutsford Heath

ON THE morning after last year's general election, fellow members of the Martin Bell campaign team were put to considerable inconvenience by being locked out of their HQ (Aitken lied to hide intelligence role, May 21).

I had the keys in my pocket and I was nowhere to be found. I was not, as I let it be believed at the time, sleeping off the effects of the triumphant night before in somebody's front garden.

I was attending a meeting in a secluded corner of Knutsford Heath with my MI6 controller, the Prime Minister and several other chums of Lord Lucan (who were, I think, at the wrong meeting). Also present was that bloke from Coronation Street who had to go to

court to prove he was not bawling — seemingly a double agent.

The main business was a proposal by the Prime Minister that we send charabancs of Bell's Bellies over the border into the Macclesfield constituency to destabilise Nick Winter. It appeared that the PM had some deep-seated antipathy to Macclesfield Town football club, the full extent of which only became apparent during his otherwise opaque exchange with Nick Winter in the House on Wednesday afternoon.

If the long-promised rehabilitation and knighthood are not forthcoming I may correct further misunderstandings. David Geen, Delph, Oldham.

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14 OBITUARIES

Boris Ford

A silver pen for the people

BORIS Ford, who has died aged 80, was a freelance editor and writer. He was a notable figure in Cambridge English — though the relationship was stormy — and professor of education at Sheffield, Sussex and Bristol universities. He edited *The Pelican Guide to English Literature* — though the relationship was stormy — and professor of education at Sheffield, Sussex and Bristol universities. He edited *The Pelican Guide to English Literature* — though the relationship was stormy — and professor of education at Sheffield, Sussex and Bristol universities.

His gift was to be a catalyst, bringing people together and enabling them to fulfil their capacities for expression. His instrument for this work was his silver pen, which appeared as soon as discussion developed.

Before taking up his post at Sheffield, Ford was education secretary at the Cambridge University Press, editor of *Universities Quarterly* from 1955 until 1968, editor of *The Journal of Education*, and with Denis Thomson, Raymond O'Malley and myself an editor of *The Use of English* from 1961 until the late 1960s.

At one stage Leavis's wife, Q.D., wrote a note to Ford in the third person: "Mrs Leavis informs Mr Ford that he is no longer an acceptable visitor to her house. Any communications from him will not be answered." But Ford persisted in serving the cause of the *Leavis magazine Scrutiny*, and extended its influence on a mass scale, notably by issuing seven volumes of *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, which sold prodigiously even as the study of English declined into "literary theory" and seemed to lose its freshness and excitement.

Later, the *Pelican Guide* was revised and extended to 11 volumes and continues to sell. Ford was the son of an Indian Army officer and a Russian mother. He was born in India, but was admitted as a choir scholar at King's College, Cambridge, where he sang the solo part in the opening hymn at the Christmas Eve service. Later, he was sent to Gresham's School in North Norfolk, near Holt, to

be taught English by Denis Thomson, who became a life-long friend and collaborator. Ford read English at Downing College, Cambridge, in the late 1930s under Leavis, whose teaching he found "compelling and inspiring". It was a period during which Leavis's teaching was in its heyday, with half the undergraduates (including Ford) gaining firsts in English. He appreciated Leavis as a "distinctive historian of literature with an uncanny sense of the human and moral texture of society". He wrote an essay on *Wuthering Heights*, which was published in *Scrutiny*.

During the war he was officer commanding the Middle East School of Artistic Studies, attempting to provide a general humane education for men in the forces through the study of poetry, plays and other creative writing. After this work, it was a natural transition to chief editor, deputy director and finally director of the Bureau of Current Affairs in London.

From here he supplied civilian groups and the services with current affairs pamphlets and material, including *Map Review*, which I joined him to edit. Questions were occasionally asked in parliament about some of our publications, which were regarded by some Tory MPs as subversive. When it came to issuing a map of Russia, for example, we were only allowed to put in the rivers and mountains; even to show the boundaries of the autonomous republics was thought to be subversive.

In 1951 Ford became information officer of the technical assistance board of the United Nations in Geneva and later New York and in 1953 secretary of the National Enquiry into Liberalising Technical Education.

DURING the late thirties he reviewed Sampson's *Concise Cambridge History of Scrutiny*. This sowed the seeds in Ford's mind, he declared, for the later guides he proposed "manuals which undertake a critical survey of the subject". So, when WE Williams, a Penguin executive, was in discussion with



The word goes out... Ford's gift was as a catalyst, enabling people to express themselves

Allen Lane about a possible guide to English literature, Ford seemed the obvious choice. He was offered £100 or £150 per volume of the guide, and when he protested, Allen Lane remarked that those who wrote the guide would "get [professional] chairs out of it".

Ford went ahead, involving many contributors who were practising *Scrutiny* writers, such as John Speirs, Gordon Cox, Arthur Humphries, Denis Harding, John Holloway, Wilfrid Mellers and Derek Traversi, and others who were not, such as TS Eliot, Lionel Trilling, Quentin Anderson, Edgell Rickwood, Geoffrey Gimson and Nikolaus Pevsner.

Leavis had a deep distrust of Ford's attempt to spread the *Scrutiny* standard so widely. As Ford put it: "Perhaps he feared that this entry into a world of mass sales might contaminate us all with a spirit of vulgar superficiality." At any rate, at this time Leavis referred to Ford as a "major peccadoryer". Later, I believe, Leavis became more sympathetic to the project. After all, as Ford pointed out, the sales of Penguin books, indeed of Leavis's own books in

paper covers, confirmed there were many more good readers than the sceptics had ever dreamed of.

Ford maintained his engagement with creative approaches to education, producing some excellent critical notes, for instance on Henry James's novel, *The Ambassadors*, in *The Cambridge Quarterly* special issue on Leavis in 1966. He admitted that although this novel had been on his undergraduate list, "I couldn't get on with it and indeed didn't finish it".

FIFTY years later, he called it "a wearisome and self-indulgent display of verbal pyrotechnics". Finding the character, Vandenberg, "intolerable" and the novel a failure. This led Ford to realise that "Leavis never discussed the dramatic structure of a novel or poem, or even of a play" — an insight revealing a freshness of thought on Ford's part which he maintained until the end. He was, for instance, working on a version of *Daniel Deronda*, and, taking a hint from Leavis, reducing George Eliot's novel to one entitled *Guendolen Harleth*.

omitting all the heavy material about Jewish destiny. We also owe to Ford's engagement with Britain the remarkable opera for children, *Noye's Fludde*, which was commissioned by Ford during a painful period when he was head of school broadcasting at Independent Television.

He was actually sacked from his post because he set out to make some wild criticisms of advertisements. His interests in art and music were sustained throughout his life. He was a contributor to *Modern Painters*, a pianist and harpsichordist, and continued to sing in choirs. He was twice married, first to Noreen, with whom he had three children, two daughters and a son, and secondly to Lucy.

While both marriages were dissolved he received a great deal of support from his children, whose multiple talents he delighted in. He also brought up a daughter of his wife from a previous marriage.

David Holbrook

Boris Ford, editor and writer, born July 1, 1917; died May 20, 1998

Dr Jimmy Jeffriss

Aids and comfort

DR JIMMY JEFFRIS, who has died aged 88, was the founder of the Jeffriss Research Trust, one of this country's leading centres of research into HIV and Aids. He was a warm, avuncular figure, justly renowned for his sympathetic bedside manner, although this was not so much practised at bedside as in the busy venereology department of St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. It was here in 1929 that he first came as a medical student and where, apart from war service in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR), he remained until his retirement in 1976, nearly half a century later.

Jeffriss was an early specialist in venereology, practising long before the use of antibiotics transformed the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. In his regard for his patients, he was a true pioneer. At a time when there was much guilt and shame associated with the contraction of VD, and many frightened and depressed people inevitably felt stigmatised, Jeffriss determined to create within his unit a kind of, to use his own phrase, "climate, free from censorious attitudes, which would put patients at their ease and enlist their co-operation".

As the incidents of syphilis and gonorrhoea increased during the war to epidemic proportions, Jeffriss ensured that St Mary's was staffed and equipped to meet the challenge, thus making the Paddington treatment centre the largest and one of the best in Europe. He also developed a special expertise in the pathology of venereal diseases as they affected homosexual men, and it was not long before London's gay community realised that at St Mary's they would receive not only the best possible treatment, but also an approach that was supportive and understanding.

The crowning achievement of Jeffriss's life came after his retirement, when, in 1980, a grateful patient, who might make a gift to St Mary's in recognition of his successful treatment there. To Jeffriss' great delight and surprise, this turned out to be a cheque for £250,000, which enabled him to set up in 1981 a special research centre devoted to sexually transmitted diseases.

By that time HIV and Aids had become a deadly epidemic and the Jeffriss Research Centre had a special role at the

forefront of Aids research. Two academic departments — one at St Mary's and the other in Liverpool — were established and the two young professors appointed to the Jeffriss chairs became important figures in the war against Aids. It was a matter of great satisfaction to Jeffriss that he lived to see the development of anti-retroviral drugs and combination drug therapies, which seem to prolong the life of Aids sufferers and give new hope for their future.

Jeffriss was born in Highbury Park, north London, and came from a long established and eminent medical ancestry. His father had been a GP and Jeffriss was himself the fourth generation of his family to be associated with St Mary's. On his mother's side was his famous great-great-uncle, Dr Thomas Monro, who was chief physician at the Bethlem Hospital in Soho



Jeffriss... true pioneer

from 1792 to 1810, one of four Monro doctors who had practised there since the 18th century. Thomas Monro was also a gifted watercolourist and a patron of Turner and Girtin. Jeffriss, himself a keen collector of water colours and drawings, wrote the commentary for the catalogue of the V&A exhibition, Dr Thomas Monro and his associates.

Educated at Sedburgh School, Jeffriss went directly to St Mary's, and after qualifying remained as clinical assistant in the ophthalmic department until he was appointed assistant medical officer in the VD department in 1938. Having joined the RAFVR in the same year, he was called up in November 1939 and posted as a flight lieutenant to the special treatment centre at the RAF hospital, Halton. He was promoted to squadron leader in 1941.

After demobilisation in

1946 he returned to St Mary's, where he was appointed registrar of the VD department. In the same year he became assistant director, and two years later he was made consultant in administrative charge, in which position he remained until retirement.

During his long and distinguished career in venereology he received many national and international appointments. In the 1960s and 1970s, he was treasurer and then president of the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases, and later secretary of the International Union for Venereal Diseases and Treponematosis, the only international body advising the World Health Organisation on care and treatment in the field of VD.

He was an NHS consultant in venereology at the outset of the National Health Service in 1948, and for five years served as deputy dean of St Mary's Medical School. He also served as vice-chairman of the council of the House of St Barnabas in Soho, a refuge for people in distress, founded by his great-great-uncle.

Although a man of great professional dedication, Jeffriss had a highly affable and sociable personality, which expressed itself not only in his family life but in abundant sporting and leisure interests. One of his great passions was for sports cars, which began with a small Stover he drove from school. He also had a Morgan, which he raced at Brooklands, an Alvis and a 4.5 litre Bentley.

He was a handy sailor and greatly enjoyed cruising on the yachts of his more affluent Harley Street friends. A good rifle shot, he also represented his hospital in shooting contests. More recently, he had taken to bee-keeping at his home in Kent, where he had lived since the 1940s, and from where he frequently presented friends with presents of delicious honey.

Jeffriss' zeal and care for the sick never left him, and until his death he was working regularly as secretary and fund-raiser for the Jeffriss Research Trust. He leaves a widow, Phyllis, and a son, Jeremy.

Derek Grainger

Frederick James Gordon Jeffriss, physician and venereologist, born February 4, 1910; died April 6, 1998

Sosuke Uno

In the land of the falling son

THURST into power after a bribery scandal and dismissed after little more than two months amid a wave of allegations about his conduct, Sosuke Uno, the former Japanese prime minister who has died aged 75, presided over one of the shortest-lived administrations in Japan's post-war history. His 69-day premiership, which was doomed after the long-dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost control of the upper house in July 1989, typified the turbulence that has plagued Japanese politics in the past decade.

Uno was propelled into office on June 3, 1989, by LDP kingmakers as one of the few senior politicians not tainted by the Recruit stocks-for-favours scandal, which had forced the resignation of his predecessor, Noboru Takeshita. The move to restore the

image of the ruling party backfired four days later when Uno became embroiled in allegations that he was having an affair with a geisha. In a magazine interview, the geisha described the relationship, detailing Uno as a mean-spirited cheap skate — a taunt that was hurt



Uno... plagued by scandal

him more than the revelations about his sexual peccadilloes. In the campaign for the House of Councillors election a month later, LDP elders ordered the prime minister to keep a low profile to minimise the wrath of women voters.

Nonetheless, persistent bribery scandals and the unpopularity of a new consumption tax resulted in a crushing defeat for the LDP, which signalled the beginning of the end of the party's 30-year stranglehold on power. It also ensured the political demise of Uno, who was removed just as he had been appointed — by secret decisions made in smoke-filled rooms. His period in office was the fourth shortest among Japan's 24 post-war prime ministers.

Uno was born to a family of sake brewers near Lake Biwa in Shiga prefecture, western Japan, where he was to build

a political power base. As a conscript during the second world war, he was captured by Soviet troops in Korea. His book, *Damot Tokyo* (Home to Tokyo), published in 1948, was based on his experiences as a POW and later made into a film.

The first of his 12 terms in the lower house of the Diet, Japan's parliament, began in 1960 when he was elected as the member for Morioka, Shiga prefecture. Under the seniority system of Japanese politics, his long tenure ensured steady promotion, including director-general of the defence agency, international trade and industry minister and foreign minister.

It was in foreign affairs that he made his biggest mark: firstly in the 1960s for his role in normalising relations between Japan and South Korea, then in the 1980s for

fighting Tokyo's corner in trade disputes with Washington. Even after being forced from the premiership, he represented the LDP in Beijing in talks with the Chinese Communist Party leader, Jiang Zemin, in 1990.

Outside of politics, Uno was known as a cultural all-rounder, who wrote several books, composed haiku, played the piano and excelled at kendo. Despite his brief and scandal-plagued tenure, in 1994 Uno became only the third living Japanese prime minister to be awarded the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, Paulownia Flowers, Japan's highest decoration for those outside the imperial family.

Jonathan Watts

Sosuke Uno, politician, born August 27, 1922; died May 19, 1998

Eddie Rabbitt

The country road to pop

EDDIE RABBITT, who has died aged 56, belonged to the club of sleek country singers who found favour in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the era of the movie, *Urban Cowboy*, and the polished pop-country fusion known as "country pop". His hits included *Rocky Mountain*, *Two Different Worlds*, *Drivin' My Life Away* and the million-selling *I Love a Rainy Night*, which topped both country and pop charts in 1980. This broad appeal was confirmed by the sales in both markets of *You and I*, his 1982 duet with Crystal Gayle.

Recently, however, Rabbitt claimed he had never courted "crossover" success. "I came to Nashville with nothing in mind about pop music," he asserted. "I was country, and it just so happened that the kind of music I was making in country music crossed over to the pop charts."

Rabbitt was born in Brook-

lyn, a first-generation Irish-American, and grew up in New Jersey, where he sang in bars and made a few obscure records. In 1968, he moved to Nashville, where he wrote songs for established artists like Roy Drusky and Willie Nelson. His first significant writing credit was on *Kentucky Rain*, recorded in 1970 by Elvis Presley.

In 1974 he wrote the chart-topping *Pure Love* for Ronnie Milsap and restarted his own recording career as a singer. In the wake of *Drivin' My Life Away* (off my mind) and other hits, in 1976 he was voted top new male artist by the Academy of Country Music, the Nashville's Country Music Association (CMA).

His continuing success encouraged him to expect further recognition from the country music establishment. "A lot of people in the press believed that I was going to

win some kind of award," he said recently. "But it was up to the CMA. I don't know how they do business."

Rabbitt partly suspended his career to spend time with his infant son, Timothy, who suffered from liver disease and died in 1985. He would never regain his momentum. "It could have been that I had had my time," he reflected, "but I think I gave it up and lost a lot of that fire to my kids."

In the early 1990s, he spoke out against music videos for picturing "a bunch of girls with nothing on" and a "bunch of rock 'n' rollers singing about sex. It distorts our youth mentally, so that science and maths are now so far away from a child's mind that anyone thinking about it is a nerd." His song, *American Boy*, found appreciative listeners in the US armed forces during the Gulf war, and was adopted by the republican candidate, Bob Dole, for his 1996 presidential campaign.

Rabbitt was found to have cancer in March 1997, but went on to produce a new album, his first for six years. It was titled, with a bravado that proved illusory, *Beatin' the Odds*. He is survived by his wife, Janine, and a son and daughter.

Tony Russell

Eddie Rabbitt (Eddie Thomas), country singer, born November 27, 1941; died May 7, 1998

Death Notices

FORD, Boris, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Bristol, died peacefully at his family and friends he loved. Flowers, Enquiries to: J. H. Kenyon Ltd, 9 Pond Street, London, NW3, 0171 744 3035.

In Memoriam

COOPER, Sheila, 22.4.46 - 10.5.98, Birthday memories in our thoughts forever. Mum, Albert, Phil, Jackie and Sheila's many friends.

Marriages

SPURRY/LAVIN, Brenda Gavin, daughter of William and Susan Gavin of St Albans, and Alan Spurry, son of Victor and Olive Drury of York, are very pleased to announce that they are to be married in Winchester today at 11.00.

1072 place your announcement telephone 01753 4587 or fax 01753 4128 between 9am and 5pm Monday.

A Country Diary

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: Alan, whose bees can produce almost 500lbs of honey in a good year, invited me to the orchard in Coaley to watch his early season inspection of the hives. He told me carefully what to wear: tightly-sealed overalls, rubber boots, rubber gloves, on top of which he fixed a beekeeper's hat and a gauze veil. Dressed alike, we approached his row of seven hives in the corner of the orchard as the other residents — Friesian heifers — watched with only limited interest.

After putting his smoker to provide a calming influence, Alan lifted the top of the first hive. With 40,000 of the hive we were rapidly surrounded by a constantly changing population of bees as they sought to establish our intentions. As we moved along the line of hives — from those with Brother Adam of Buckfast-

leigh's Italian/New Zealand cross bees to Carniolians — every lifted roof revealed the industrious life of the worker bee, that amazing 24-day life cycle of programmed activity. Part of the intent was to check that the anti-varroa precautions were working satisfactorily, but Alan also pointed out the newly-made honey glistening in the combs. His bees forage mainly on wild flowers and local orchards, but some returning bees entering the low-level portals carried the pollen of oil seed rape, a field of which lies a mile to the west.

The bees were getting excited by now and buzzing anxiously around us. The defences worked — only one got through my veil and it had the grace not to sting me. I appreciated that.

COLIN LUCKHURST

Birthdays

Charles Aznavour, singer, 74; Kenny Ball, jazz trumpeter, bandleader, 67; Lynn Barber, columnist, interviewer, 54; Richard Benjamin, actor, 60; George Best, former footballer, 52; Cheryl Campbell, actress, 49; Naomi Campbell, supermodel, 28; Menzies Campbell, Lib Dem MP, 57; Roger Casale, Labour MP, 38; Rina Maria Da'Prato, fashion designer, 41; Anthony Holden, writer and journalist, 51; Howard Kendall, football manager, 52; Paul Mariner, footballer, 45; Prof Christopher Peacocke, philosopher, 48; Elizabeth Rowlinson, mathematician, 68; Susan Strassberg, actress, 60; Betty Williams, Irish peace campaigner, 55; Ernest Wistrich, former director, European Movement, 75; Iwan Wyr Jones, Plaid Cymru MP, 49.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

WE WERE wrong to say in our front page lead on May 20 that the two British nurses released from prison in Saudi Arabia, had been pardoned. They were as we stated correctly on Page 1 and in a leader yesterday — released after their sentences were commuted, not annulled, by King Fahd.

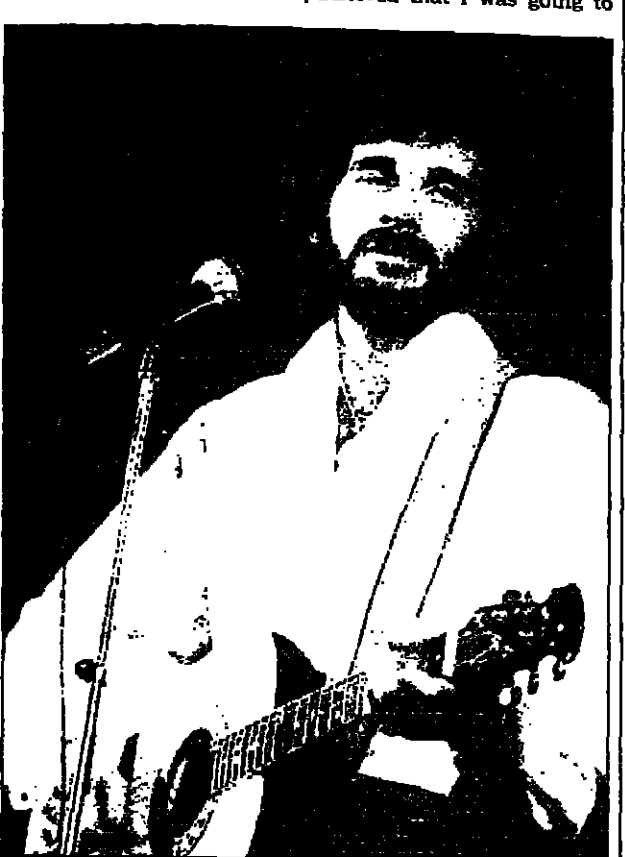
THE CAPTION beneath a series of pictures of people attending the funeral service for Frank Sinatra, Page 2, yesterday, ended in confusion. The main error identified Jack Lemmon, who appeared in one of the photographs with a patch over his eye, as Jack Nicholson.

IN A REPORT headed, Nuclear energy profits power ahead, Page 21, May 20, we gave the date of the near di-

aster at Three Mile Island as 1969. It was in 1979.

IN OUR Online section, Page 4, May 14, and in our website, dian.co.uk/online we said, "The Science Museum was the first British museum on the Internet in 1994." That is not correct. The Natural History Museum was the first museum in the UK to establish a www site in July 1994. The Science Museum came online several months later.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 5589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Finsbury Road, London EC2R 2ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk



Father figure... Rabbitt suspended his musical career in order to care for his dying son Timothy

PETER PEARSON

150 من الامم

Shell report shows its green side

Roger Cowe

SHELL UK yesterday published its first "Report to Society", acknowledging its responsibility to stakeholders such as staff and customers and encompassing an audited environmental statement.

Chris Fay, chairman and chief executive of Shell UK, stressed that the oil group had recognised its traditional failure to relate to society at large. He insisted that it had changed and was now eager to understand what groups such as customers and campaigners wanted it to do.

The Report to Society was a response to "legitimate questions and concerns", he said, describing it as "the beginning of an important new phase in our relationship with the outside world."

Referring to Baroness



Thatcher's claim that "there is no such thing as society", Mr Fay said Shell had come to realise that was not true. "Society is very much alive and kicking. Companies cannot divorce themselves from what is happening out there."

Mr Fay committed Shell UK

to the "triple bottom line" of social, environmental and economic measurement, but stressed that companies could not be expected to step in where government refused to act, and that profit remained a key part of decision-making.

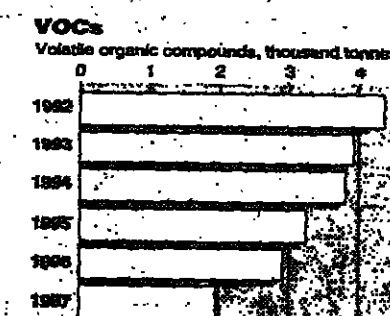
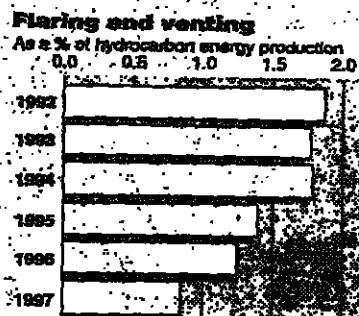
"Wealth creation is at the heart of all we do," he said. "But responsibilities to the environment, to the health and safety of our staff and to wider society will form an integral part of the way in which we do business."

Mr Fay drew attention to Shell UK's successes and failures, detailed in the environmental statement. He pointed to the 40 per cent reduction since 1992 in flaring and venting of gases at rigs and refineries, but acknowledged the company's disappointing record of oil spills last year.

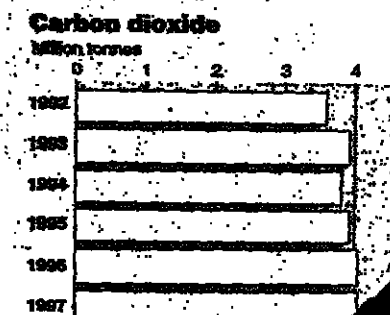
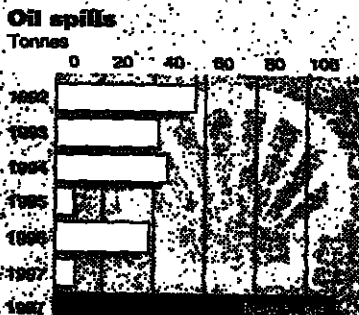
"The rise in the figure for oil spills is completely unacceptable," he said.

A Greenpeace spokesman

Environmental successes...



...and failures



News in brief

Storehouse in hiring line

STOREHOUSE, which runs the Bhs and Mothercare store chains, expects to create 1,500 jobs. Plans for 12 new Bhs stores are part of a refurbishment and redesign programme started two years ago that has helped push profits sharply higher.

Chief executive Keith Edelman said competition in the children's clothing market was tough but menswear, womenswear, lingerie, homeware, babywear and baby equipment performed well. Reporting a 5.7 per cent increase in profit to £125 million for 1997-98, Mr Edelman said progress would continue this year but sharply rising costs would begin to take a toll. — *Tony May*

RAC books vote venue

THE RAC has hired Earl's Court to hold an emergency meeting at which it will ask its members for permission to sell its breakdown and driving school operations to the US Centand group.

Thousands of the RAC's full members who pay subscriptions to its Full Mail gentlemen's club are expected to attend the meeting on June 19. The RAC confirmed yesterday that these members will get between £33,000 and £35,000 each as a result of the £450 million deal agreed with Centand. It said the deal includes payments of £15 million to set up a new RAC carpooling group representing motorists and £17 million to go into the club's coffers "for a rainy day". — *Julia Finch*

MPs call for digital unit

THE Government should create a new department to deal solely with the revolution in digital communications technology, MPs on the backbench culture, media and sport select committee said yesterday. All regulators overseeing TV and telecommunications should be combined in a Communications Regulation Commission. The commission, which would also oversee BBC content, should manage content and economic regulation.

The MPs added that analogue television broadcasts should cease by 2010, to speed the take-up of digital television. The BBC attacked the proposal for a single regulator as creating a "monolith with an unwelcome concentration of power". — *Chris Barrie*

Progress on pensions

LARGE firms implicated in Britain's pension mis-selling scandal have dealt with 74 per cent of the cases, the Government said yesterday.

In a written parliamentary answer the economic secretary to the Treasury, Helen Liddell, said the latest figures compare favourably with data released last March showing only 15 per cent of cases had been resolved.

The large firms account for almost 85 per cent of cases. She added that some companies were close to being removed from the blacklist of firms with the worst clear-up rates. — *Reuters*

Abdul Latif Jameel Group

ON March 25, 1997, we published an article under the headline "Saudi Arabian empire hit by family feud" which reported that Magdi Jameel had commenced legal proceedings in Saudi Arabia against his brothers Mohammed and Youssef Jameel. We regret that our report, which was based upon a Citigate press release apparently issued on behalf of Magdi Jameel, was misleading insofar as it suggested the Group was in jeopardy and that Mohammed and Youssef Jameel had acted to the detriment of the other family members. We have apologised to the Abdul Latif Jameel Group for this and paid its legal costs and damages.

MMC sent into billboard battle

Jul Treanor

AMERICAN advertising company Clear Channel Communications appeared set to win the protracted takeover battle for More Group, the billboard and bus-shelter advertising company, after the Government referred to competition authorities a rival bid by France's JCDecaux.

Decaux had been seen as the favourite to win the race with a £475 million offer. However, Clear Channel matched that offer yesterday and More Group promptly recommended the bid to its shareholders.

Despite the Monopolies Commission inquiry, the French company refused to pull out of the race and urged More's shareholders not to act. This prompted speculation that Decaux may increase its offer once the outcome of the inquiry is known.

The battle for More Group began in March after Clear Channel's £446 million agreed offer for the company was topped by Decaux.

Nigel Griffiths, competition and consumer affairs minister, said yesterday he was referring Decaux's bid to the

MMC because of competition concerns in the market for advertising on "street furniture" such as bus shelters and public toilets. The MMC must report its findings by September 8.

A More-Decaux merger would control about 90 per cent of advertising on bus shelters in Britain.

Roger Parry, chief executive of More Group, said the bid by Clear Channel did not raise such competition concerns.

The Clear Channel offer represents £11.10 per share. Shareholders have 28 days to decide whether to accept. Technically, Decaux's bid has lapsed because of the MMC review is known.

More Group controls some of Britain's most prominent advertising sites, such as London's Cromwell Road, often used for display of quirky posters.

Decaux expressed surprise that its bid had attracted government attention because it did not believe that advertising on bus shelters had been considered separately from the overall outdoor advertising market in the past.

Sega enlists Microsoft in machine code war of the games consoles



THE battle for world supremacy in video games intensified yesterday when Sega threw the wraps off its new console, Dreamcast, and revealed that it has enlisted the forces of software giant Microsoft, writes Chris Barrie.

The console, unveiled by Sega president Shoichiro Irimajiri (above) in Tokyo,

is intended to win back ground lost to rivals Sony and Nintendo.

By using Microsoft's Windows CE operating system, developed for hand-held computers, Sega hopes to do away with the need to rewrite the latest games to run on its consoles. Users will also be able to access the Internet and use e-mail.

For Microsoft, the move is an opportunity to establish the operating system as a games platform, encouraging writers to use Windows CE.

The console can be used for on-line game-playing and has been developed with NEC, Hitachi, Yamaha and VideoLogic.

Microsoft chairman Bill

Gates said: "Dreamcast's state-of-the-art 3D graphics technology and on-line capabilities will provide unprecedented levels of realism and performance in game play."

Sony's PlayStation and the Nintendo64 have eaten into sales of Sega's 32-bit Saturn. US sales have slowed but Sega will continue to sell software for Saturn.

Dreamcast is said to achieve 128-bit performance and has "64 channels of music, voices and gameplay sound effects". The machine launches in November in Japan and by Christmas next year in Europe and the US.

PHOTOGRAPH: TOSHIFUMI KITAHARA

Three jailed for flotation fraud

THREE businessmen were jailed yesterday for defrauding investors over the \$60 million market flotation of Butte Mining in 1997. The verdict came after a jury spent 56 hours deliberating over 14 days — 20 hours longer than record set by the Maxwell trial jury in 1996.

Bankrupt Midlands entrepreneur Clive Smith and John Clarke, of Gerrards Cross, Bucks, a founder director of Butte, were both jailed for three years and disqualified from practising as directors for five years. Smith's former associate, Malcolm Clews, aged 48, of Conway,

Wales, was jailed for 18 months, but no disqualification order was made.

Roy Bichan, former deputy chairman of the Welsh Development Agency, was acquitted by the jury at Chester Crown Court. The prosecution and trial which lasted 11 months cost more than £2 million.

Smith, aged 51, described as the "driving force" behind the 1997 share issue, and Clarke, aged 48, were convicted on two counts of conspiracy to defraud. Clews was convicted on one count relating to a later rights issue. All were charged under the 1968 Financial Services Act.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.53	Germany 2.50	Malaysia 5.20	Singapore 2.82
Austria 13.73	Greece 487.04	Malta 0.62	South Africa 5.11
Belgium 57.86	Hong Kong 12.29	Netherlands 3.14	Spain 285.77
Canada 2.30	India 66.12	New Zealand 2.57	Sweden 12.30
Cyprus 0.52	Ireland 1.118	Norway 11.85	Switzerland 2.2
Denmark 10.75	Israel 5.93	Portugal 267.51	Turkey 397.720
Finland 6.60	Italy 2.767	Saudi Arabia 6.02	USA 1.5970
France 5.99			

Supplied by Reuters (excluding rupee, shekel and malawi)

PowerGen sell-off funds purchase plans

David Cowe
Industrial Editor

POWERGEN hopes to boost its war-chest by up to £400 million through the sale of its North Sea exploration business as it activates plans to buy a regional electricity company at home and seeks a US merger partner.

Britain's third largest power generator, unveiling flat pre-tax profits of £260 million yesterday, put its PowerGen North Sea (PGNS) gas

and oil interests up for sale as it made plain its aim of generating new income at home and abroad to arrest a decline in its share of the UK energy market and consequent lower margins.

It has appointed SBC Warburg Dillon Read to find a buyer for PGNS, which also has interests in the Irish Sea and contributed £22 million to last year's profits. Analysts have priced the business at £300 million but PowerGen believes it can drive this up to nearer £400 million.

Ed Wallis, PowerGen's

chairman and chief executive, indicated that the company wants a merger with a US utility rather than taking over or acquiring a stake in an American energy concern.

PowerGen is known to be pursuing a merger worth up to £10 billion with Houston Industries, the Texas-based utility that made an unsuccessful bid to acquire Norweb in 1996. It has been linked to a \$4 billion takeover of Florida Progress but a merger is the more active option.

Underlining the difficulties in securing a foothold in the

US market, Mr Wallis said: "Our strategy is not to approach America from the outside but to enter from the inside. Our aim is to create an internationally integrated energy company."

With PowerGen's share of the domestic energy market already down to 19.5 per cent and set to slip further, Mr Wallis said buying a regional electricity company would help replace earnings lost through stiffer competition in power generation.

Thwarted by government and regulators from acquir-

ing Midlands Electricity two years ago, Mr Wallis said the hurdles remained in place — but he was optimistic they would be lifted. "We have talked to a number of players as well as the regulatory authorities and continue to do so."

He denied that PowerGen had made lifting of the restrictions its price for supporting government plans to safeguard the coal industry. He backed producers' demands for coal to be guaranteed a 30 per cent share of electricity generation.

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FinanceGuardian

Pound falls to six-month low

Mark Atkinson
Economics Correspondent

STERLING began a renewed slide on the foreign exchanges yesterday as weak retail sales data and dovish comments from members of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee convinced dealers that interest rates have peaked.

To the relief of exporters, the pound fell at one point to a six-and-a-half month low of DM2.8625, compared with a recent high of DM3.10, before recovering slightly to close at DM2.8691.

Analysts said that, after being stuck at around DM2.90 for the past couple of weeks, sterling was now on a gentle slide towards a new floor of DM2.80. "The risks for sterling are on the downside from here," said Adam Cole, UK economist at HSBC in London.

The pound's decline began

with overnight comments from MPC member Willem Buiter, who said in an interview on BBC Radio Five Live that the economy was losing steam.

As one of the group of hawks who have been arguing for further interest rate rises to damp down inflationary pressure, his comments, suggesting he may have had a change of heart, made markets sit up and listen.

Expectations that interest rates, currently 7.25 per cent, would not be increased again were reinforced by subsequent data showing a rise of just 0.1 per cent in high street sales in April.

The slowdown was also clear when month-to-month fluctuations were stripped out. In the three months to April, sales were 4.3 per cent higher than a year earlier, compared with a 5.1 per cent increase in the March quarter, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Giving evidence to the



Commons Treasury select committee, Bank of England Governor Eddie George said the figures showed "very weak" growth in spending, although the Bank's deputy governor, Mervyn King, also a hawk, was noticeably more cautious.

He told the committee the figures were lower than expected but that it was too early to judge whether the rise in earnings was "wor-

rying". Mr George said it was not conclusive proof of the need to raise interest rates. "We need to know a lot more than just the number," he said, adding: "Is it that bonuses are going to last for three months... or is it more serious and telling us that there is an underlying trend which is going up?"

Despite seeing signs of a slowdown in domestic demand, Mr George said there

was "scarcely any possibility" of a recession over the next two years.

Mr Buiter said a "soft landing" was the most likely scenario, although he acknowledged stagflation — a combination of sluggish growth and rising inflation — was a possibility.

Although last week's Inflation Report, published by the MPC, highlighted the inflationary risks of the falling pound, Mr George told the committee he was "not at all unhappy" about what was happening to the currency.

He attributed the slide to growing confidence in the quality of the euro following the selection of its 11 members and the establishment of the European Central Bank at the beginning of this month.

This was helping European currencies recover against sterling, said Mr George, who added that the slowdown in UK economic growth was also a factor undermining the pound's strength.

Notebook

Good for Soros — and for Eddie



Edited by
Alex Brummer

BITAIN'S remarkably transparent system of setting interest rates is starting to deliver some important dividends for the government.

Public interviews and testimony by members of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee — including the Governor Eddie George — leave little doubt that despite strong headline inflation and worrying levels of earnings growth base rates have peaked at 7.25 per cent for the time being at least.

Together with some encouraging comments from Mr George before the Treasury Select Committee, this has helped to ease sterling down a further couple of pence.

This is good news for the Government as well as George Soros.

The downward push for sterling began with comments by Willem Buiter, a hardliner on the MPC, who said the UK economy was "clearly slowing down". His words were echoed in the House of Commons by Charles Goodhart, who famously joined the doves led by Mr George at the April session of the MPC. In his latest evidence Mr George was sur-

prisingly cool about average earnings figures of 5.2 per cent, suggesting that data may be distorted. He saw the latest retail sales data, just 0.1 per cent up last month, as evidence that the economy is slowing.

Two other factors have become important. It is clear from Professor Goodhart's comments that a critical influence on his decision to change tack on higher interest rates. This is fascinating because others on the MPC — including its most influential member, Mervyn King — have been reluctant to take sterling into consideration, claiming its strength as a short-term factor.

Perhaps more important over the longer haul are events in Asia. There has been a concerted effort to talk down the impact of the Asian crisis on the Group of Seven economies. But with violent student revolution in Indonesia the scale of the crisis has been exposed. What happens in Indonesia is critical for Japan, because of high levels of bank loans and inward investment which some estimates put as high as \$40 billion. Now longstanding cracks in Japan's financial facade are spreading to the industrial sector, with Nissan forced into restructuring and credit-rating agencies putting its debt under scrutiny. The risk of a global recession spreading from East Asia and Japan to the US and Europe becomes greater by the day. This explains why monetary policy makers on both sides of the Atlantic are showing such reluctance to raise interest rates.



BASS chairman and chief executive Sir Ian Prosser (pictured left, with finance director Richard North) yesterday summed up the company's policy of dumping businesses

that may be hit by falling consumer spending: "By next year we will be out of poor pubs and out of bingo and racing. Instead Bass will focus on businesses it

believes are less vulnerable to vagaries of the economy. "People are not looking for leading-edge pubs any more," said Prosser. But he predicts that "the trend for eating out

will continue". Bass was in London, unveiling a flat set of half-year profits — but insisted that its huge reorganisation would pay off next year.

Thomson float sparks first SFA inquiry

Liz Stuart

THE City's investment watchdog has begun its first inquiry into a stock market listing after many would-be investors complained of failing to secure a stake in Thomson Travel Group's flotation.

The review by the Securities and Futures Authority, which will be completed next month, will enable its Complaints Bureau to assess whether individual complainants should be assisted in seeking compensation.

Thomson, Britain's largest travel operation, floated on the London Stock Exchange for about £1.7 billion earlier this month.

The listing proposal, which was expected to be popular because shareholder perks include discounts on holidays and flights, was announced on April 18. Applicants were given 17 days, including the first May bank holiday, to return forms sent out with the mini-prospectus on April 20.

At least one of the five official share shops handling the consumer launch admits it

sent out forms a week late, which it estimates may have affected adversely applications from about 3,000 households.

David Jones, spokesman for the SFA, said 180 complaints had been received. "When the regulator gets complaints, this is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. The financial services companies themselves will have received far more."

There is code to ensure that consumers have enough time to respond to a flotation prospectus. But Mr Jones said: "The review may highlight

lessons to be learnt from this float."

Gavin Oldham, chief executive of the Share Centre, the main source of the late mailing, said: "Even with the delay, people had a week to apply. We cannot and should not take the blame fully for the problem... Although the forms were mailed seven days late, because our mailing house failed to act on our instructions, there were also delays in the Royal Mail's post rooms."

In an attempt to pacify angry would-be investors, the Share Centre said people who

received their forms late would be able to buy Thomson shares with no dealing commission or stamp duty, and to specify a "reserve" maximum price they were willing to pay. However, the shares have risen from their initial price of £1.70 to £1.83.

Thomson has said that applicants who missed the deadline will still be eligible for the shareholder perks provided they buy shares before the end of the year.

Of the five share centres handling applications — Barclays Stockbrokers, Barclays Stockbrokers, NatWest

Stockbrokers, The Share Centre and Skipton Building Society — only the Share Centre admits it had problems.

Initially Thomson said 10 per cent of shares would be available to private investors but this was increased to 17 per cent when the offer was several times oversubscribed.

Of the 1 million people who registered for a prospectus, 500,000 applied and each received 291 shares, valued at £500. "The levels of interest were more like a privatisation issue than a normal flotation," said Thomson spokesman Russell Amerasekera.

Computer firm executives head for £1bn bonus

Chris Barrie sees IT shares make fortunes on both sides of the Atlantic

FIVE computer industry executives stand to make more than £1 billion between them due to the performance shares and options they hold in two outstandingly successful IT companies.

Philip Hulme and Peter Ogden, the two founders of the British company Computacenter, are sitting on paper fortunes of £523 million after the company successfully floated on the stock market yesterday.

In the United States, three managers from Computer Associates, a software firm, are in line for \$1 billion in shares as a bonus if the company's shares top \$55.33 for two more days over the next four months. The shares were

trading at \$59.4 in late afternoon trading.

The payout will be worth \$550 million to chairman and chief executive Charles Wang, \$280 million to president Sanjay Kumar, and \$93 million to research and development vice president Russell Artzt.

Computacenter's stock rose to \$309 on the first day of trading before closing at \$297, valuing the company at \$1.15 billion. The shares were 12 times oversubscribed. The stock bonanza extended to more than 30 senior members of staff, who became paper millionaires. Chief executive Mike Norris found he was worth \$20 million in shares and options.

The other 3,360 employ-



Mike Norris, chief executive of Computacenter, who has shares and options worth £20 million PHOTOGRAPH: TONY ANDREWS

ees collected between 25 and 265 free shares worth between £192 and £2,033.

Mr Norris said he was "pleased" the float was successful and he could now get back to running the business. He added that he could not contemplate leaving the company, which he

enjoyed running, although he was taking the weekend off to visit Epcot with his two children.

He said that the group would concentrate on expansion in the UK and on the Continent.

However, Mr Norris stressed that 97.5 per cent

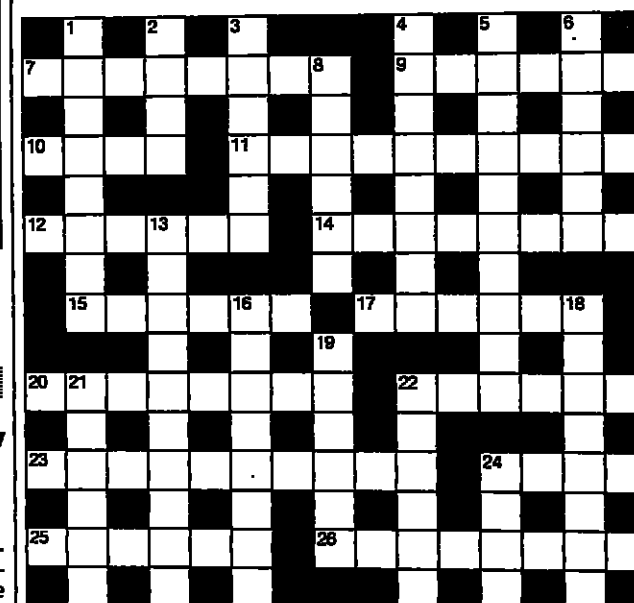
of his personal worth was linked to the company in the form of shares. He said: "I am hooked in to the success of the company."

Mr Hulme is donating £33.5 million from his flotation profits to charity, while Mr Ogden is giving away around £20 million.

Computacenter specialises in providing distributed IT and related services to corporate and public sector organisations. The company takes over the planning and implementation of IT equipment, then manages and supports those installations.

Guardian Crossword No 21,281

Set by Crispa



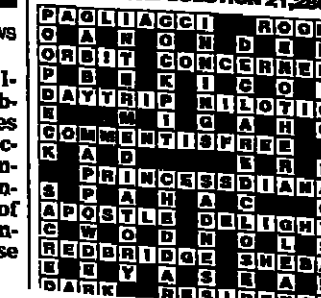
Across

- 7 Avoid fish and poultry (8)
- 9 Blue as can be — may well be practised (6)
- 10 Grim, causing many great displeasure (4)
- 11 Timekeeper getting very little help (6,4)
- 12 A winner takes part, showing some delicacy (5)
- 14 Prompting soldiers to guard the monarch (8)
- 15 Talk and see about parking before church (6)
- 17 He does go on! — and that's right in a father (5)
- 20 Returned to carry out the gold by the rear exit (4,4)
- 22 Make a contribution, and so get on in time (6)
- 23 Tend to gain converts from blowing up! (10)
- 24 Friends' clobber must be returned (4)
- 25 It uses awfully flimsy stuff (6)
- 26 Late in the day the head makes a regular appearance (8)

Down

- 1 A Greek character with small children rises against authority (8)
- 2 Where to find some really husky Europeans (4)
- 3 Fate of Korean capital is settled (6)
- 4 A shopper maybe wanting more cuts (8)
- 5 Flushing over not being backed for president (10)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,280



- 6 A dive making small change to charge (6)
- 8 A green alternative of sorts (5)
- 13 Novel but quite unappealing residence (5,5)
- 16 Music for a trainee in domestic work (8)
- 18 Naomi was never anything but kind (8)
- 19 Put in a good word for quiet lift (6)
- 21 So sour it makes one twitch (6)
- 22 An Australian getting rigged out (6)
- 24 To gamble calls for craft (4)

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